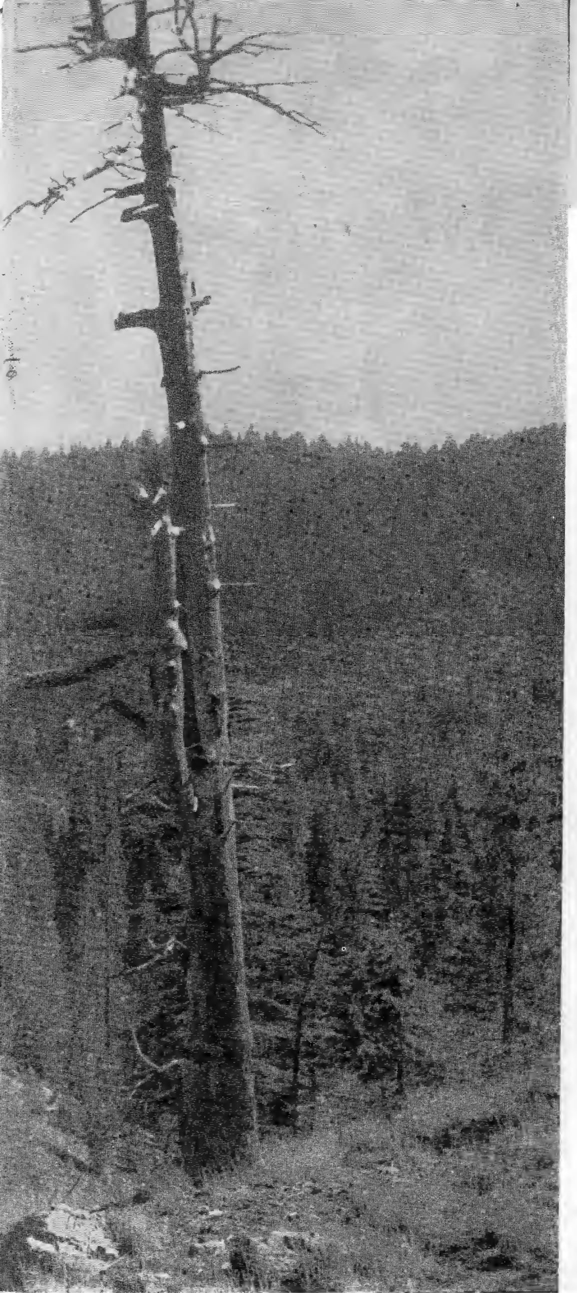


FOREST CONSERVATION, AND AFFORESTATION IN AFGHANISTAN

BY A.G. SHAKURI

As a country of varied climatic conditions, Afghanistan has a variety of forests in dfiferent parts which, if properly and economically used, can benefit the country as an important natural source in building a strong national economy. This requires promulgation and enforcement of a forest law on the basis of which necessary measures maybe taken for conservation, development and exploitation of forests throughout the country.

Forests in Afghanistan covers an area of 1,987,000 hectares which due to administrative and protective reasons have been divided in two groups: The industrial forests and the fruit tree forests.

1—The industrial forests of Afghanistan, located mainly in eastern and southern regions of the country, include needle leaved trees such as Cedrus deodra, Quercus ilex, Pinus exelsa, Picea mornida, and Olea cuspidata. The industrial forests of Afghanistan are specifically as follows:

A. In Kunars Loy Woleswali, 1,542,000 jeribs; (one hectare = 5 jeribs).

B. In Nangarhar province, 674,300 jeribs;

C. In Laghman province, 288,400 jeribs;

D. In Logar province, 15,700 jeribs;

E. In Pakthia province, 2,686,300 jeribs.

2—The fruit tree forests which include trees such as Pistachia vera, Amygdulus communis, and Juglans regia, covers the northern and western parts of the contry as indicated below:

A. In Badghis province, 747,800 jeribs;

B. In Baghlan province, 437,700 jeribs;

C. In Balkh province, 54,500 jeribs.

D. In Takhar province, 248,500 jeribs;

E. In Samangan province, 688,500 jeribs.

During the last three years a series of surveys and mappings, concerning the forests of Afghanistan, have been carried out which form the foundation of scientific agricultural planning. The achievements can be summarised in the following lines:

—Determining the forest areas by stereoflex equipment.

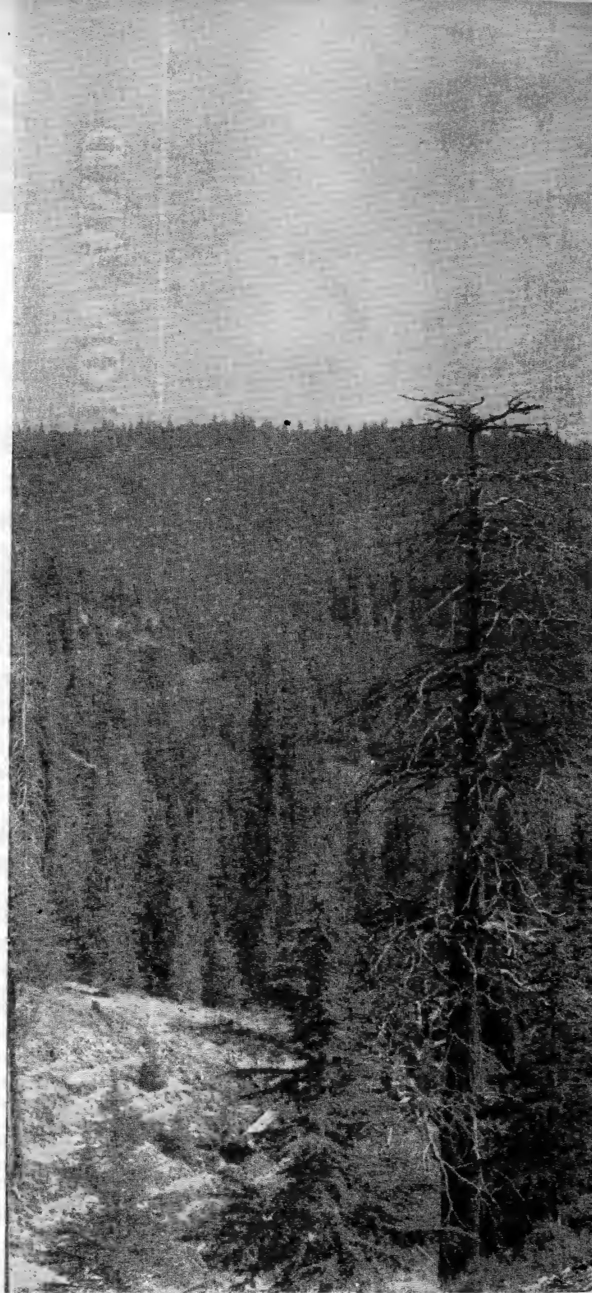
—Determining the boundaries of Pistachia vera forests on the aerial photographs, printing of ten aerial maps of Herat and Badghis provinces.

—Collecting seeds and sowing them on experimental basis, recording the results and providing a collection of branches, flowers and fruits of various trees.

—Study and launching a chemical-mechanical campaign against diseases and insects in the capital and provinces, preparing a collection of diseases and insects, collecting of flaura with their scientific names, analysing medical herbs and finding out the percentages of their compounding parts.

—Distributing 10,000 Populus negra, Populus cilliata and Populus hybried trees in the capital and provinces.

—Sowing of 400 kgs of



Pistachio vera inside plastic bags, a new method of establishing nurseries.

—Management of 20,000 jeribs of Patichia vera forests in Badghis province and of 2,000 hectares of industrial forests in Nangarhar province.

—Reviving of 60,000 hectares of forest lands seriously damaged by cruel cutting of their trees.

—Providing a map showing the Kouchies' route.

Studies reveal that during the past years the natural forests of Afghanistan have decreased for which two factors are responsible: climatic factors and human factors.

The existence of vast arid areas has lessened the annual rain and moisture which, in turn, has brought about conditions unsuitable for forest growing. On the other hand for more than 2,000 years the forests of this country have been exploited in a cruel and non-scientific way which has seriously damaged the forest areas of Afghanistan.

To confront the two mentioned factors, the following measures have been taken by the government:

—Preventing cutting of the trees;

—Anticipating transportation of prohibited timbres;

;—Preparing programmes for enlarging orchard areas including establishing nurseries;

- Taking preventive measures against natural and unnatural blazes and providing extinguishing devices;

—Dinstinguishing and controlling diseases;

—Taking measures for preventing sliding and erosion of land in the forest areas;

—Taking measures for protecting natural water resources and reservoirs.

—Taking measures to prevent grazing in the forests and providing devices for protection of natural and cultivated forests against floods and winds;

—Controlling sub-products of forests;

—Controlling and surveillance of the near-by inhabitants' activities in forests.

The Department of Forests, with due consideration to the importance of forests in the national economy of Afghanistan, has drawn up coordinated schemes which will be implemented within the Seven Year Development Plan of the country. Carrying out of comprehensive surveys, concerning the forests, are included in the schemes which are:

—Survey and study of artificial forests in the capital and provinces;

—Surveying water resources in Baghlan, Samangan, Konduz and Takhar provinces;

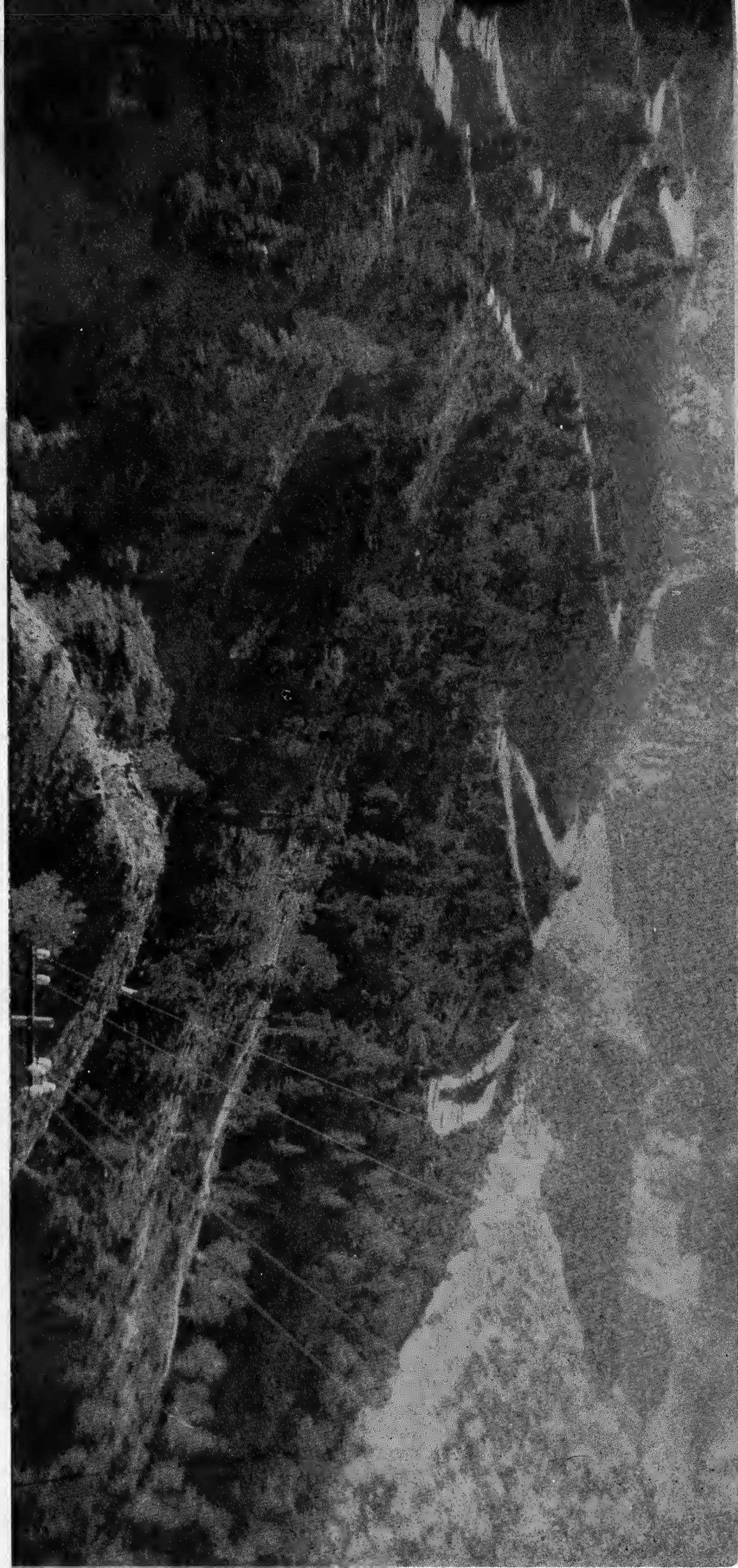
—Demarkation of pastures in Baghlan and Samangan provinces;

—Preparing a collection of medical herbs of Afghanistan.

Meanwhile the meteorological data on Afghanistan will be collected and climatological maps will be printed and a botanical gar den will be established on an area of 25 jeribs. Registering seeds for sale and purchase with the agreement and through the Improved Seed Company and studying forests' diseases are also included in the future plans. The woods, used in industry, will be studied and distinguished. Moreover, over 2,000,000 sapplings of Pistachia vera and 7,000,000 other sapplings will be planted in the forest regions and 6,000 hectares of forests will newly be established.

During this period, people will be acquainted with methods of exploiting forests, and 150 km forest roads will be built.

All what has been done and what is going to be done, is for conservation and development of the country's green wealth, the forests.



HOW LONG ARE OUR HIGHWAYS?

BY: AFZAL NASIR

The construction of modern roads network started in Afghanistan with the launching of the first five year development plan in 1956, during which more than 1,000 kilometres of asphalt road was constructed. Road building was also given a priority in the second five year development plan of the country and today Afghanistan possesses 1895 kilometers of asphalt road, 625 kilometers of concrete road, 6253 kilometers of paved and macadamised roads and 9042 of dirt roads.

In the past Afghanistan owed much to its strategic position, the country was the crossroad of civilisation, and highways passing through our country were considered as the important trade routes. The decline of which was the main factor in hampering the development of the country. The strategic importance of Afghanistan was reduced with the increase of sea borne trade notably after opening of the Suez Canal, which affected land trade routes.

The first motorable road in Afghanistan was built some 70 years back in a primitive form by using manpower. At the onset the road existed only in Kabul but later was extended to Jabalus Seraj and Jalalabad.

Although Afghanistan became strategically important in the 19th as well as in the early 20th century, road construction did not get off the ground. Later the "closed door" policy caused the economic condition of the country to deteriorate further and highways and bridges in whatever form they existed were destroyed and passes remained closed.

After the independence of the country in 1919, the strategic Kabul-Kandahar highway was constructed by using only manpower as no proper road construction machinery existed in Afghanistan. The road though bumpy and primitive still was an important link between the two great cities. and helped in the development of trade and commerce. Simultaneously some more roads were constructed in Kabul for vehicle transport.

Some attention to road construction was paid during the time of Nader Shah as late as 1930 when a strong central government with effective political and administrative control over the country came into being. The road construction organisation was strengthened and ultimately was promoted to the status of a ministry. Linking Kabul with the northern provinces through Darrai Shikari was also accomplished though not in the form of a modern road. Many other roads too were constructed during this period.

The Ministry of Public Works with the road construction responsibilities drew plans and formulated projects for roads and other constructions through its engineers, architectures and skilled personnel. With the launching of the coordinated five year development plans during the premiership of our National Leader real breakthrough was achieved.

During the first five year plan of the country, the following roads were constructed:

1. Kabul-Torkham, work on this 244 kms long road began in 1954 and by 1965 it was fully completed and asphalted.

2. Kabul-Jabalus Seraj, the work on this 68 kms long road began in 1966 and by 1966 it was fully asphalted and completed.

3. Salang, from Jabulus Seraj to Doshi a total of 107 kms of asphalt road was constructed. The work on it started in 1956 and was completed by 1964.

4. Doshi-Sherkhan Bandar asphalt road was completed in 1966 with a total length of 221 kms. The work on this road had started in 1956.

5. Kabul-Kandahar-Spinboldak 595 kms long asphalt road was completed in 1966, the work on this road had started in 1960.

6. Kandahar-Herat-Torghundi 680 kms long concrete road was completed in 1965, the work on this road had started in 1960.

7. Asphalting of Kabul-Laghman road was done in 1964.

8. Herat-Islamqala 124 kms asphalt road was completed in 1968, the work on it had started in 1963.

Besides the aforementioned asphalt roads a large number of dirt roads were built or repaired. The work on Pule Khumri-Mazare Sharif road 320 kms and Kabul-Gardez road 117 kms began in 1965. Similarly the work on Naiab Abad and Hairatan 57 kms long road was completed in 1972 the work on this road had started in 1970.

In the Seven Year Economic and Social Development Plan which has entered its second year the road and highway construction can be divided under three headings:

A. Construction and completion of Gardez-Khost asphalt road 117 kms long, the work on which had started in 1965.

B. Completion and asphalting of Shiberghan-Andkhoi, Daulatabad-Maimana road with a total length of 200 kms uptil 1982.

C. Completion and asphalting of Kabul-Gardez road last year.

D. Completion and asphalting of 95 kms long Jalalabad-Assadabad road by 1979, the work on this road had started in 1965.

E. Completion of Dil Aram-Zaranj road with a length of 216 kms by 1977, the work on which had started in 1969.

F. Completion of the Garden Devar-Punjab road 158 kms long by 1982, the work on which had started in 1969.

G. Completion and asphalting of Kunduz-Khanabad-Keshm road with a total length of 136 kilometers by 1980, the work on this road had started in 1972.

F. Construction of a number of bridges and Abdullah Burj-Bagram road 69 kms long by the end of this year the work on it had started in 1967.

I. Construction of new galleries in Salang Pass the work on it will be completed by 1978.

J. Survey and repair of Kama-Kunar Khas road 78 kms long by 1978, the work on it had started in 1974.

K. Completion of Hairatan port building during 1976, the work on which had started in 1974.

L. Construction of Laghman and Nouristan road 125 kms long by 1980, the work which had started in 1975.

2. NEW PROJECTS:

A. Construction of Maimana - Qalai Nau-Herat road 415 kms long, the work on this road had started in 1976 and will be completed by 1982.

B. Construction and asphalting of the Yakhchal-Deshu road 300 kms long. the work on this road had started in 1976 and will be completed in 1982.

C. Construction and asphalting of Deshu road upto Iranian border 230 kms long, the work on this road started in 1976 and will be completed by 1982.

D. Construction of Hairatan bridge 107 meters long between 1976-82.

E. Repair and renovation of the Herat-Chesht road 131 kms long between 1976-82.

F. Construction of the Assadabad road 25 kms long during 1977-78.

G. Construction of the Darrai Suf-Aibak road 114 kms long between 1976-78.

H. Construction of the Keshm-Faizabad road 109 kms long between 1981-85.

I. Construction of the 'Pule-Isteqlal' 57 meters between 1977-78.

J. Construction and asphalting of the second link between Nadir Shah Mena and Pule Charkhi between 1977-78.

K. Survey, construction and asphalting of the Matak-Bamian road 236 kms long between 1980-84.

L. Survey and construction

The first motorable road in Afghanistan was built some 70 years back in a primitive form by using manpower. At the onset, the road existed only in Kabul but later was extended to Jabalusseraj and Jalalabad. After the independence of the country, in 1919, the important Kabul-Kandahar highway was also constructed by using only manpower as no proper road construction machinery existed in Afghanistan.

HOW LONG ARE OUR HIGHWAYS?

Some attention was paid to road construction in 1930 when a strong central government with effective political and administrative control over the country came into being. The road construction organization was strengthened and ultimately was promoted to the status of a ministry.

of the 164 kms. Kandahar and Tarin road between 1980—84.

3. PROJECT MAKING.

a. Project making of the Jabalus Seraj Surobi road 101 kms long between 1977-78.

b. Survey and design and project making of the Anjeer—Khavak road 50 kms. long during 1982.

C. Survey and project making of Surobi road 60 kms long between 1981-82.

D. Survey and project making of Darrai Panjsheer, Darrai Pushal, Nouristan, Laghman Doabi by 1980 with a length of 72 kms.

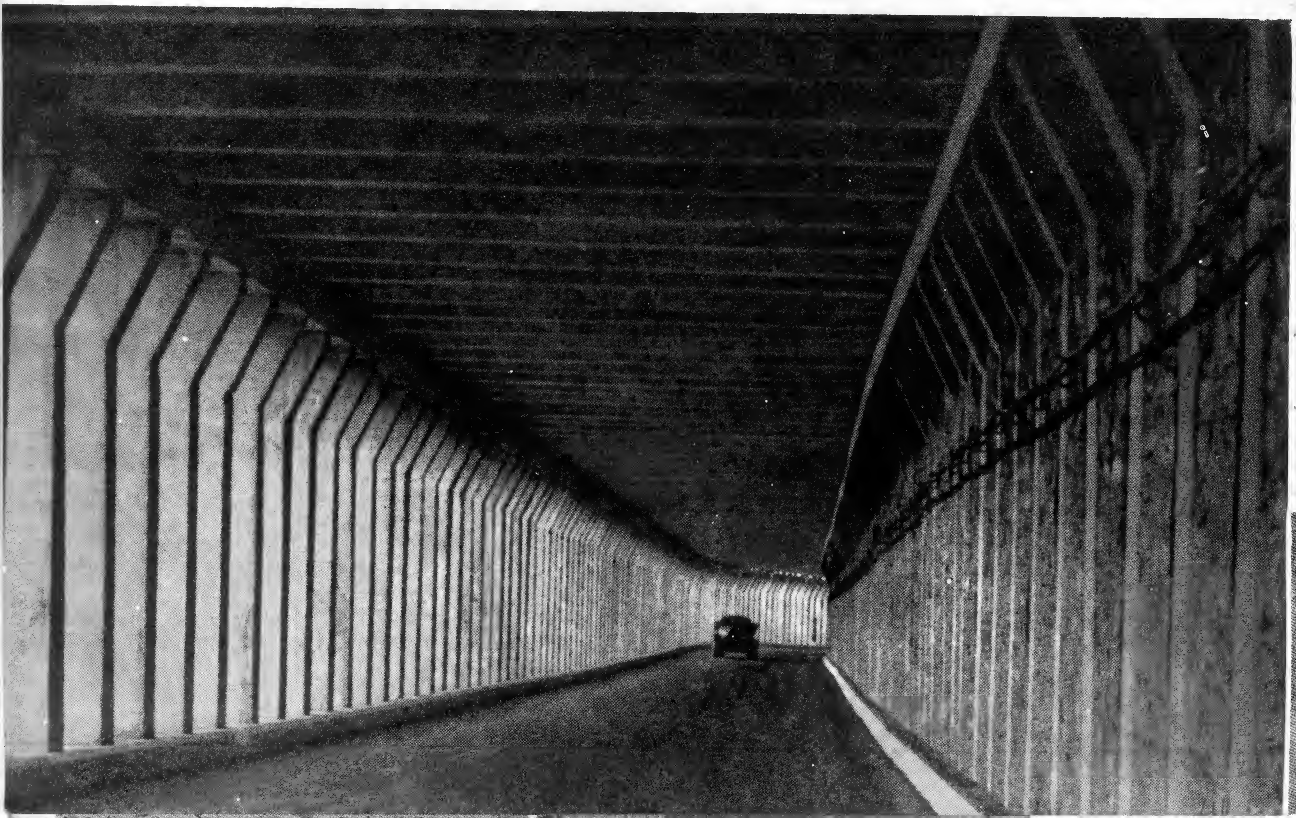
E. Survey and project making of Anjuman Pass, Pushal Pass, Kamdesh Pass during 1981-82. with a length of 134 kms.

Afghanistan is one of the largest land locked countries in Asia and has long been a region of transit and one of the most strategic areas of Central Asia. With no access to sea and in view of the costly air transport the only way out for transport of Afghan goods to international markets, and viceversa, was possible through land. Therefore, in the recent past, maximal efforts have been pooled in accelarating the road building to enable the Afghan goods compete in foreign markets.

Roads are being constructed in all nooks and corners of the country to help the producers bring their goods to the local markets, because trade is obviously a matter of movement, it postulates a producer and a consumer, that is to say a beginning and an end taste and fashion refine upon the barter of the crude necessities of daily life; commercial interests preserves old contacts. Nowadays the volume of our exports to European, and other neighbouring countries has multiplied manifolds.

The tourism in Afghanistan flourished after the completion of the metal roads between Kabul — Herat and Herat — Islam Qala. Every year more than 75 percent of the total tourists coming to the country enter Afghanistan by land at Islam-Qala to the west of the country and leave for South Asia through Torkham. Once the tourist arrives in Afghanistan he visits most of the touristic spots through asphalt and paved roads. Although Bakhtar flies them domestically but is limited to a few cities.

Tourism is a late starter in Afghanistan and in 1958 only 400 tourists had visited the country on the other hand the 1975 statistics show that more than 100,000 tourists visited Afghanistan. More than 15 percent of them visited Bamian and Bande Amir. Once the Bamian road is modernised and asphalted it is hoped that the number of tourists to Bamian and Bande Amir will increase considerably where stand the famous Buddha statues 53 and and 35 meters tall. The towering Buddha statues have now been repaired and restored.



WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

BY: A STAFF WRITER

Irrigation systems as basic infrastructures for development and for maintaining favourable conditions for the production of agricultural crops ,have a decisive role in national economy of the Republic of Afghanistan. Rivers and canals constitute the major sources of irrigation. Ground water in the valleys of the country is also of considerable importance. Total arable land is approximately eight million hectares. However, only 50 per cent of it is cultivated every year. The total irrigable area is about 5.3 million hectares, of which only 2.5 to 2.6 million hectares are irrigated yearly. Due to inadequate irrigation facilities, only 1.4 million hectares may receive sufficient amount of water and the rest lack a regular, year round water supply.

Under the nation's first seven year development plan Afghanistan through a number of major, medium and small irrigation and land reclamation projects will expand the cultivable acreage by over 300,000 hectares, and will improve water supply to over 700,000 hectares of irrigable land.

Major irrigation and land reclamation projects including in the plan will bring 83.6 thousand hectares of virgin lands under irrigation ,and ensure regular, year round, and sufficient water supply to an extra 217.8 thousand hectares. A brief review of these projects follows:

KHOSH TEPA PROJECT

In Balkh and Aqcha river basins about 800,000 hectares of land can be irrigated by water from the Amu Darya (Oxus). The Khosh Tepa Project, which will irrigate 100,000 hectares of land by pumping water from the Amu Darya, is considered to be a major attempt to develop a large area. Major undertakings in the project consist of the following:

—Construction of an intake dam and canal from the Amu Darya to the Khosh Tepa area.

—A water pumping station with a capacity of 110 cubic metres per second.

—A main canal with its supplementary construction, with 200 kilometres in length and a carrying capacity of 110 cubic metres per second at the canal intake.

—Electricity transmission lines from Mazare Sharif to the station site, with a capacity of 110 kilovolts.

—Survey, project preparation, construction of the pumping station and a part of the canal and other basic activities will be completed by 1983, the last year of the current plan. Based on preliminary estimates, a sum of Af. 7.8 billion will be invested in the Project. Of this Af. 2.8 billion is allocated in the first plan.

Although the project will be carried over the next seven years plan, beginning in 1984, what will be accomplished in the first plan period, will make a significant contribution to agricultural productivity in the country.

THE KOKCHA RIVER PROJECT

The basic goal of this project in the seven year plan is to make use of Kokcha water to irrigate land on both banks. The work will be done in two phases. The first phase will include the irrigation of the Dashte Qala on a regular basis and also the improvement of the existing irrigation system in Dashte Archi and Nao Abad.

The second phase concerns the irrigation of a large area lying in the Dashte Sheermahi. The specific physical goals of this project during the first phase are as follows:

—Analysis of the results of surveys and studies carried out in the past to prepare operational plans up to 1979.

—Construction of the diversion dam on the Kokcha near Shima Bridge and building of reservoires on both sides of the river.

—Building a canal on the right side of the river for irrigation of 12,000 hectares of new land, of which 3,000 hectares would be irrigated by pump fed canals.

—Construction of hydroelectric station on the left side of the canal.

—Construction of maintenance roads, camps, residential areas and workshops.

—Investment in this project will amount to about Af. 3.7 billion, of which Af. 1.2 billion will be spent during the first seven year plan period.

THE FARAH RODE PROJECT

To embark upon a multipurpose development programme for the Farah area, economic and technical studies began in 1975. These studies will be completed in the second half of the current Afghan year.

The annual flow of the Farah river and its tributaries is estimated at 1.2 billion cubic metres on an average. The maximum flow occurs during the winter and early spring months. Of the 85,000 hectares of land, which from the viewpoint of soil, are arable, only 34,000 hectares are actually cultivated. The largest portion of this land is devoted to grain production and the share of cash and industrial crops is negligible.

The principal goal of the project is to increase the income of the residents of

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

the area by improving and expanding the irrigation system, to raise the level of employment, to build agricultural industries and to improve the quality of social services in the province.

Preliminary studies indicate that in the first stage the construction of the Bakhshabad Dam will be feasible and with this job accomplished, it will be possible to regulate water supply in an area of 60.7 thousand hectares. This area includes 13,000 hectares in the centre of Farah, 21,600 hectares in Nao Bahar and 26,000 hectares in other regions.

The construction of Bakhshabad Dam will help the traditional irrigation in 26,000 hectares of land and will provide modern irrigation in 13,000 hectares in Farah and 21,600 hectares in Nao Bahar. The first will consist of the following:

—Construction of Bakhshabad dam with a capacity of 570 million cubic metres, a height of 80 metres, and a length of 265 metres in the upper part.

—Construction of 40 kms of road and an electric power station producing 19 megawatts, and extension of transmission lines from the power plant to towns and agricultural sites.

—Construction of a diversion dam in Kinisk and also building of the irrigation and drainage networks.

A considerable part of the land will be devoted to sugar beet production.

A sugar plant consuming 250,000 tons of beet a year, will also be constructed. Cotton cultivation will also increase, and to process the produce a 15,000 tons per year ginning plant is also planned.

The second phase of the project includes the construction of a reservoire dam in Lashkargah, upon completion of which 84,000 hectares of land may be irrigated. Moreover, a second power plant, producing 32 megawatts, will also be constructed. The cost of the project is estimated to amount to 70.9 billion Afghanis

THE HARIRODE PROJECT

The Harirode Valley in western Afghanistan merits special consideration from the viewpoints of agriculture, animal husbandry and industrial production. Work on the project started last year.

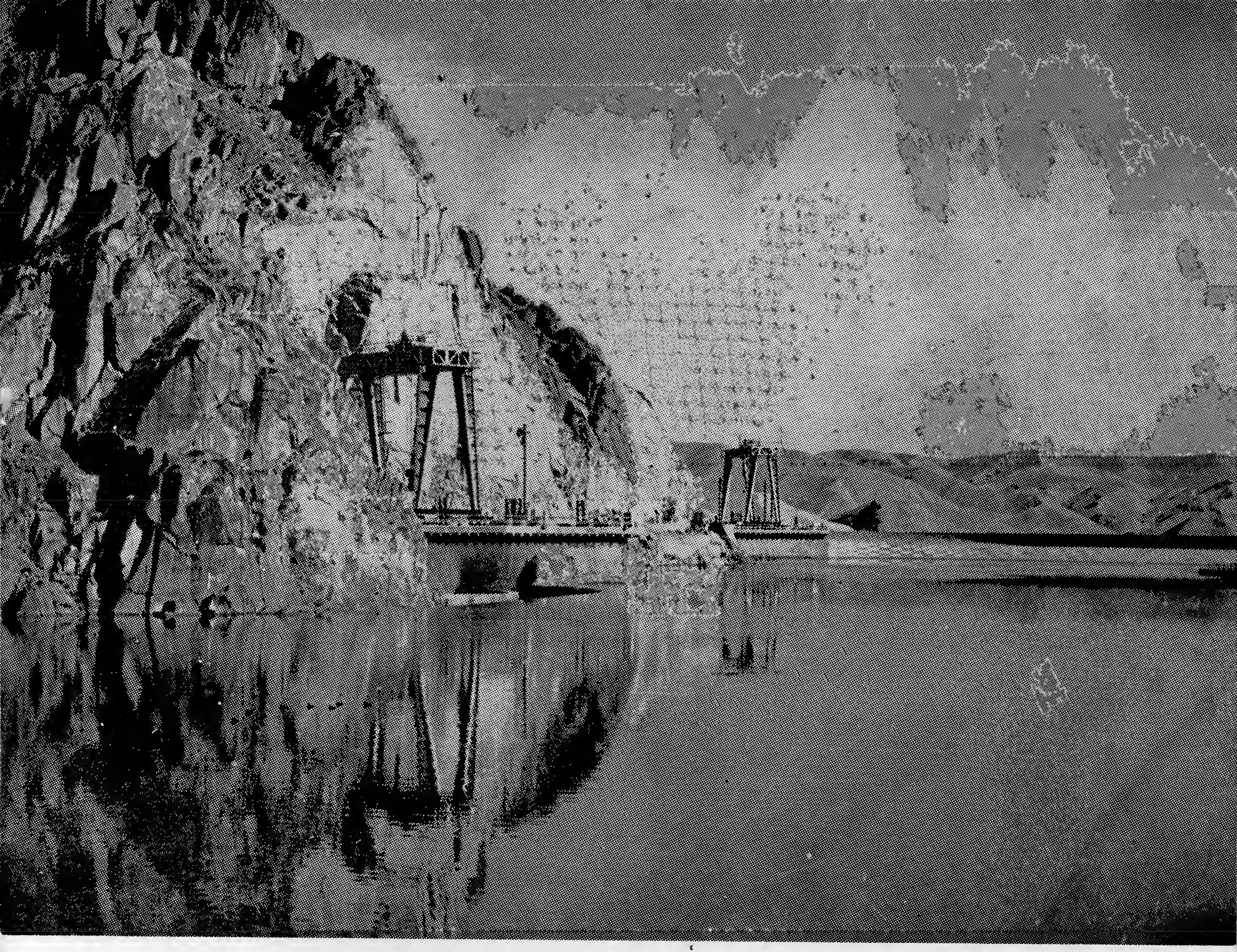
The core of the project is the 104 metre high Salma Dam, 175 km from Herat city.

The dam will have a storage capacity of 650 million cubic metres, of which 544 million cubic metres will be usable.

The project includes construction of 30 megawatts hydroelectricity plant also.

Major features of the project area:

An earth dam, a spillway which will match the maxi-



mum flow of water during flood seasons, a diversion dam, and the intake structure of the major canals.

A power generating plant, extension of transmission lines to Herat city, residences and maintenance facilities.

A 30 km new road around the project and a 200 m. long bridge on the Harirode River.

There is 73,000 hectares of potentially irrigable land in the Harirode Valley. However due to shortage of water only 40,000 hectares is irrigated, and that only periodically.

The Salma Dam and reservoire will ensure adequate water supply for all the available land, plus the 84,000 hectares situated in the upper part of the Marwa.

Af. 2.5 billion is allocated in the seven year plan for the project.

THE KELAGAI PROJECT

The Kelagai Dam and reservoire, according to the results of preliminary surveys, will improve water supply for 31.3 thousand hectares of presently cultivated land, and reclaim 21.6 thoustands of new land along the banks of the Kunduz River below Kelagai. The working plan also foresees the construction of an electric power plant with a maximum production capacity of 50 megawatts. This power will be of significant value to the industrial regions of Pule Khumri, Baghlan and Kunduz. Furthermore the dam will also aid the Gauargan and Chardara projects in developing agriculture in the region.

The major features of the project include:

—Construction of a reservoire dam and diversion tunnels. Construction of a spillway, hydro-electric power plant and extension of transmission lines to industrial centres.

2.3 billion is envisaged for the project.

CHASHME SHAFA PROJECT.

On the basis of a preliminary study, the possibility for the construction of a reservoire dam on the Balkh river at Chashme Shafa for improving irrigation prospects in the region is firmly established. Work on this project is to begin in the current year, and is scheduled to be completed by the end of the current seven year plan. The project will consist mainly of:

—An earth dam, spillway and other irrigation facilities.

—Diversion tunnels and temporary dams for the period of the construction of the project.

—Construction of a hydro-electric power plant.

—Residences, camps and maintenance facilities.

Through this dam the seasonal flow of Balkh River water will be regulated to improve irrigation systems serving arable lands located above the Khosh Tepa area.

The state has earmarked Af. 1.8 billion towards the expenditures of the project.

THE PANJSHER PROJECT

Survey and construction of a reservoire dam on the Panjsher River to regulate the water flow and produce electric power will be carried out in the first plan period. The dam will be built in an area one kilometre from Gulbahar. The dam will regulate water supply needed by the Kohistan and Parwan projects and to supplement the present reserve at Naghlu. With the construction of this dam, it will be possible to increase the volume of hydro-electric power by an appreciable degree and to regulate the flow of water in Kabul river for energy production in Sarobi, and in areas downstream.

The physical features of the project will be as follows:

—A reservoire dam, with a storage capacity of 300-400 million cubic metres of water.

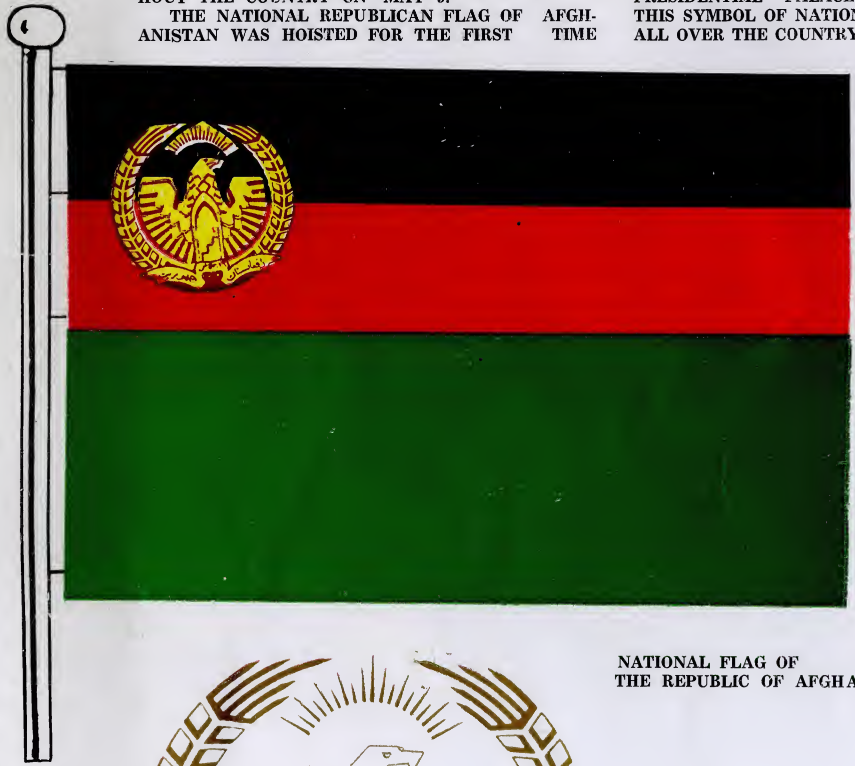
—Construction of a hydro-electric generation plant with a production capacity of 80 to 120 megawatts.

—A sum of Af. 199.2 million is allocated in the seven year plan for the project. The project will be completed during this plan period if financial resources become available for it.

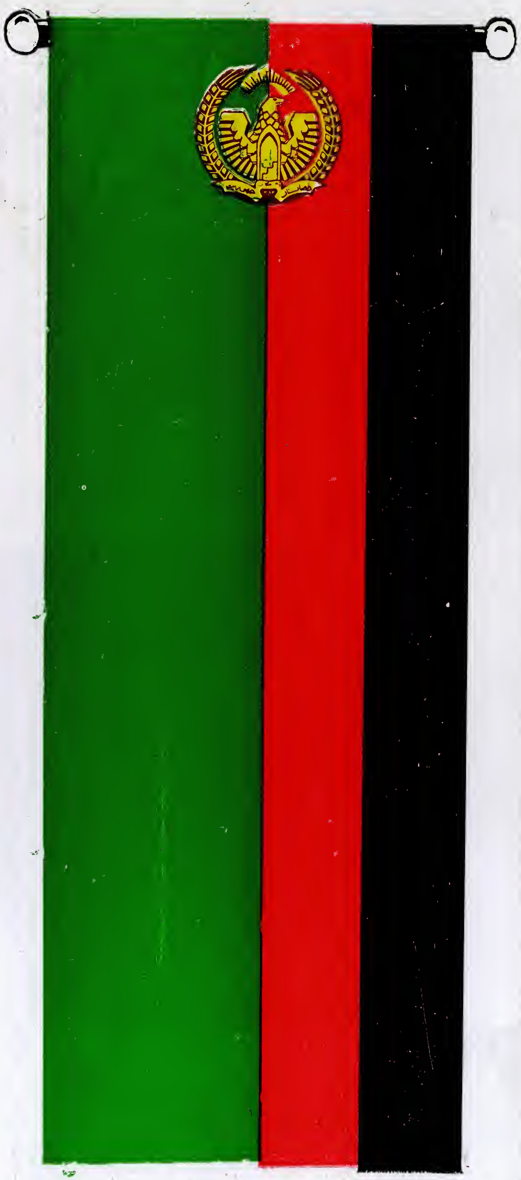
As it will help in agricultural and industrial development of Kapisa, Kabul and Parwan provinces, it will have a high rate of return, and will prevent the development of energy shortage in the area for a considerable number of years.

THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOISTING OF THE NATIONAL FLAG OF THE REPUBLICAN STATE OF AFGHANISTAN WAS MARKED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ON MAY 9.

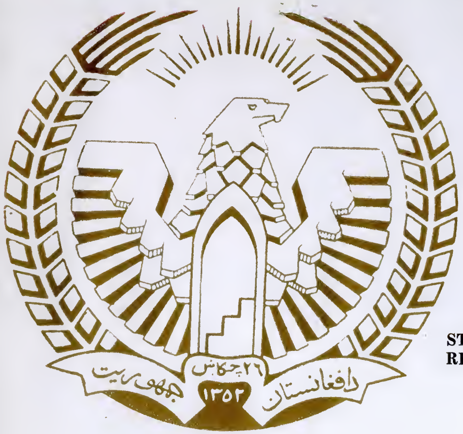
THE NATIONAL REPUBLICAN FLAG OF AFGHANISTAN WAS HOISTED FOR THE FIRST TIME THREE YEARS AGO ON THIS PARTICULAR DAY BY THE LEADER OF THE REVOLUTION, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC MOHAMMAD DAOUD OVER THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AND SIMULTANEOUSLY THIS SYMBOL OF NATIONAL UNITY WAS HOISTED ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.



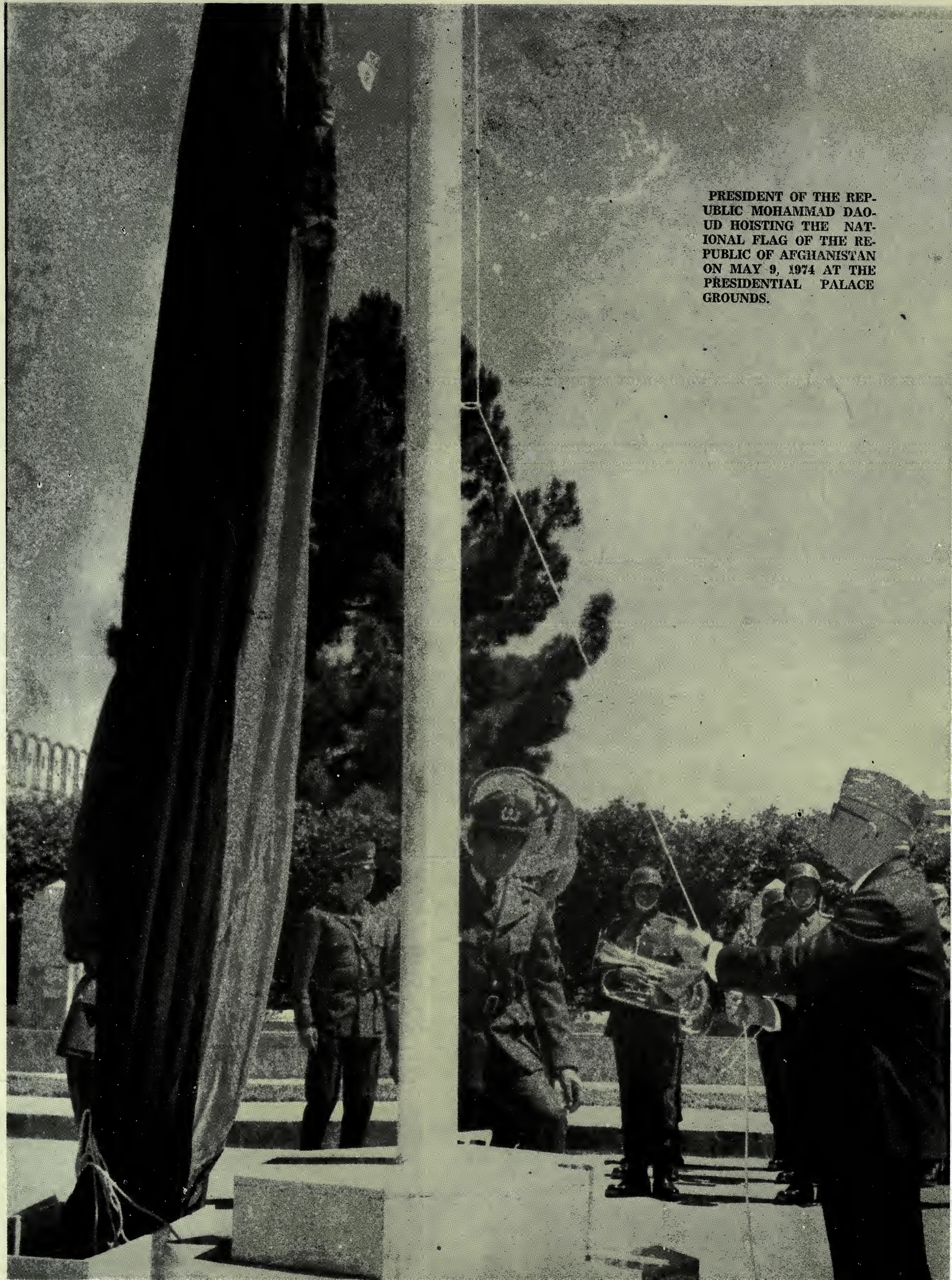
NATIONAL FLAG OF
THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN



DECORATIVE FLAG OF
THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN.



STATE EMBLEM,
REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN



PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC MOHAMMAD DAOUD HOISTING THE NATIONAL FLAG OF THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN ON MAY 9, 1974 AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE GROUNDS.

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SUMMER 1977

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(AFGHANISTAN REPUBLIC)

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AFGHAN KARAKUL-A WORLD FASHION

(SEE PAGE 4)

FROM BAGHDAD WITH GOLDS

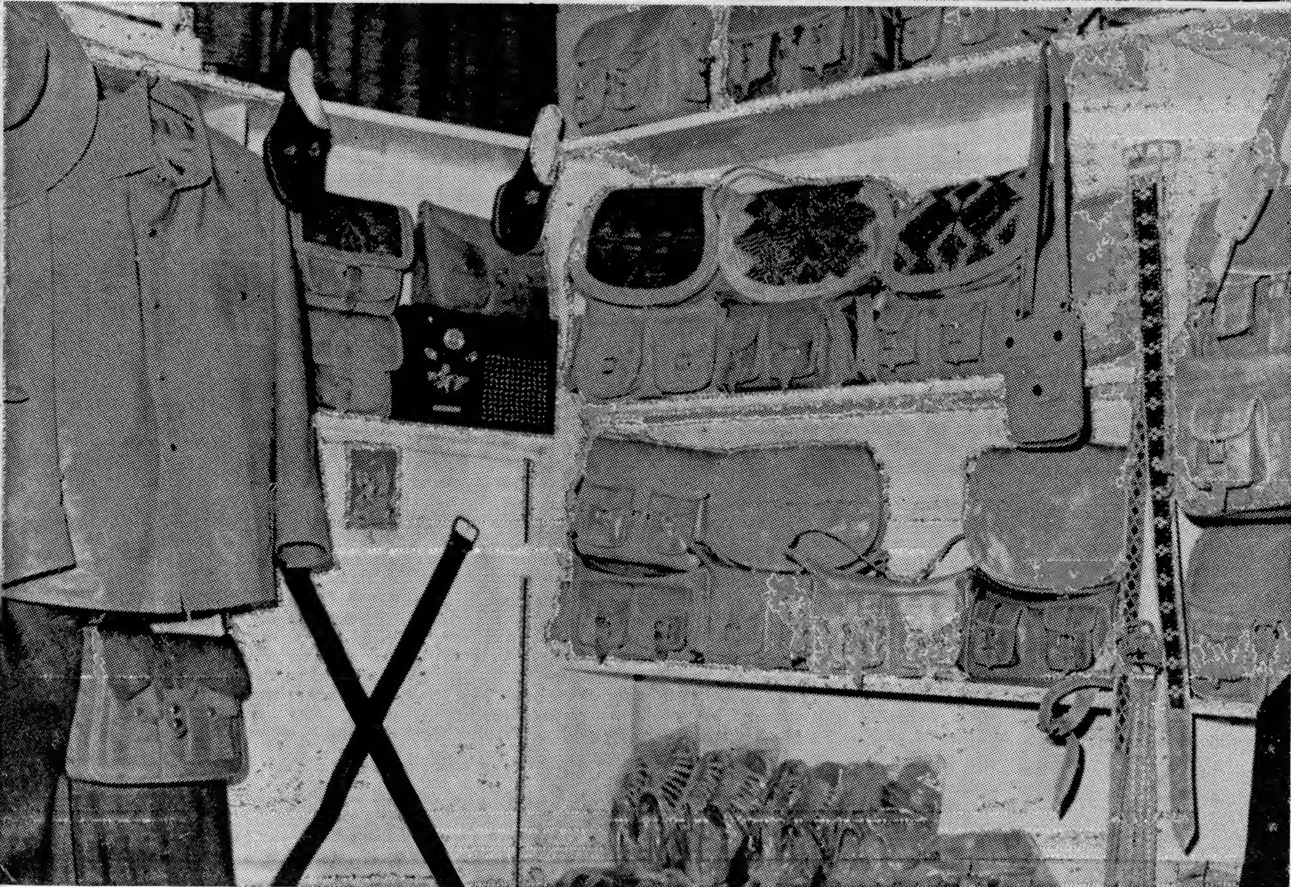
The Afghan wrestling team returns home from Baghdad with five gold and three silver medals.

(SEE PAGE 34)

Leather Gets A New Look

The export of leather in Afghanistan
is traced to more than 100 years.
During the last century,
leather export had occupied
an important place
in Afghanistan export commodities.
Nowadays, leather is exported
in different forms.
The ancient and primitive methods,
used in tanning and pickling the
hides,
have been replaced
by modern machines.

BY: A STAFF WRITER



Although the leather industry has a history of more than 1000 years it was only during the last two centuries that significant development and modernisation has appeared in leather profession in Afghanistan. There are numerous big and small leather pickling, cleaning and tanning plants in different parts of the country.

Before the modern pickling and tanning system found way in Afghan leather industry, most crude methods were used to clean leather and remove hairs from it. No chemicals were used in ancient days and hairs were removed from the hides of animals by boiling them in hot water and then sprinkling the boiled hides with powdered copper which were then intermittently sprayed with water for a few days until the hides turned into green colour as a result of a chemical reaction. The sprinkling of copper powder also lessened the fetid leather smell. Boots and sandles made of the green leather in those days were known as green shoes. This simple method of leather processing was prevalent in Afghanistan a century back.

Similarly in the olden days (nearly 100 years ago) the production of granular leather involved special process. After the leather was ripened millet seeds were spread on still wet leather and upon drying it took the form of granular leather.

The export of leather in Afghanistan is traced to more than 100 years. During the last century leather export has occupied an important place in the Afghan export commodities. Even today leather is an important export item though nowadays it is exported in different forms.

The ancient and primitive methods used to tanning and pickling the hides have been replaced by modern and up to date machines. New processing methods have been introduced. Of late the industry has been flourishing with the opening of tanning and pickling factories and shoe companies.

In Kabul new leather and shoe factories have come up with large investments. The leading leather tanning and shoe factories are Ahu shoe factory, Oqab Leather and Shoe Company, Darwesh Industrial Institute, Kabul Leather Company, Shevaki Leather Processing Plant and Yaqobi Leather Plant.

There are also a number of small leather and shoe factories in Kabul besides the big factories, such as Matin, Ittefaq, Brothers, Sadaqat, Ittehad, General etc.

The small shoe factories do not tan or pickle the leather but acquire the material from the bigger factories and also use imported artificial leather in making shoes and ladies handbags. The shoe factories in Kabul produce different varieties of shoes in beautiful designs and some times with needle works.

Leather industrial institutes also exist in large numbers in the provinces such as Herat, Kandahar, Samangan, Parwan, Mazare Sharif, Fariab and Jauzjan. However Andkhoi (Fariab), Tashqurghan (Samangan) and Charekar (Parwan) are famous provincial leather centres. These three are forerunners of the development of the leather industry in other provinces and thus have a good reputation in leather market.

The Ahu Shoe Factory was established in 1963 in the private sector. The factory produces white blue and pickled leather and is famous for making shoes and sandals. Its shoes are long lasting and are made in most modern designs. The leather processed in the factory is mostly used for making shoes and hand bags. The Ahu Factory has 95 sets of big and small machines and 500 skilled and unskilled workers. There are more than a couple of foreigners working in the factory as advisors. The factory processes the hides of buffalos, cows, sheeps and goats.

Out of the total production of leather of Ahu Factory 2,000,000 pairs of shoes are produced by the factory and the remaining leather is exported to Soviet Union, United States, Czechoslovakia, Federal Republic of Germany and Italy. The shoes produced by the factory are sold at local markets. The exports to foreign countries also include besides the pickled leather, posteenchas (fur coats).

The Darvesh Leather Institute only produces pickled leather. The Darvesh factory was launched six months ago with an initial capital of 25 million afghanis and has 14 sets of machines.

The factory since its establishment has exported 100,000 pieces of pickled leather to Soviet Union.

The leather is used in Afghanistan usually for making shoes, long boots, suitcases, handbags, ladies bags, ladies and gents belts, mexi dresses, minis, jackets, coats, over coats, caps, hats and in furnitures. But according to a statistics nearly 70 percent of leather produced locally is used in making shoes.

The leather obtained from goats and sheeps is usually used for making the top and the vamp of the shoes while the leather from cows and buffalos is used for making the soles, as it is thicker and stronger. In the recent past the cow and buffalo leather was usually used for making the traditional paizars or sandals. These paizars were decorated with miniature work and were very popular. Paizars are still made in some parts of Afghanistan.

The long boots, jackets, coats and skirts are still decorated with beautiful needle work in flashing colours. The needle work done on leather in Afghanistan is very popular in foreign countries.

HELMAND VALLEY, A FAST GROWING AREA

ABOVE: INTERIOR SHOT OF THE CONRTROL PANEL INSIDE THE KAJAKI POWER HOUSE.

RIGHT: LOCAL FARMERS IN NAD-E-ALI PITCH IN TO CONSTRUCT ONE OF THE MAJOR DRAINAGE DITCHES IN THE AREA.

BELOW: FARMERS IN NAD-E-ALI, NOW HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF MODERN FARMING IMPLIMENTS TO WORK THE SOIL OF THE FORMERLY BARREN LAND.

Camel thorn was the chief product of the barren, pebble-strewn Desht-i-Margo twenty-five years ago. Less than 200 millimeters of rainfall a year and periodic strong winds made this southwest region of Afghanistan a "Desert of Death".

For all the dryness of the land, the southwest of Afghanistan has always been a water rich region. The Helmand-Arghandab River system, drains the rains and snows of the Hindu Kush and carries an estimated 40 percent of Afghanistan's water resources to the Hamun-i-Helmand marsh and lagoons.

Yet, even on the river banks, traditional irrigated farming in many areas provided only a marginal existence. Irrigation canals might dry up by June, leaving already scraggly wheat to wither in the hot sun.

Today, the face of the valley has changed. A long-term partnership of the Government of Afghanistan with the United States in developing the region is beginning to pay rich yields for the people of the region, and for the country as a whole. In the Desert of Death more than 40,000 hectares of cotton and wheat have replaced the camel thorn. Some 63,000 former nomads and landless peasants have been settled on small farms since the project began. Agriculture produces family incomes in excess of Afs. 31,000 ($600) per year. Cooperatives are forming to buy fertiliser, farm implements and tractors.

In the old farming areas of Helmand, a new road system, motor bikes, tractors and farm implements are some of the outward signs of a new wealth arising from soaring production of wheat cotton, fruits and vegetables. New canals, double cropping, new farming techniques and an increase in land usage by as much as 60 percent in some regions have made the valley a fast growing area of the country.

The Helmand wheat surpluses have helped to feed the rest of the country. Afghanistan, which used to be a wheat importing country, dependent on food aid in wheat-short drought years, is approaching self-sufficiency and exploring the construction of storage facilities to save future wheat surpluses for use in poor harvest years. Within a single generation, the farmers of the Helmand Valley have made the leap from a traditional to a modern, self-expanding agriculture.

No magic formula produced this transition overnight. The change required 25 years of Afghan-American cooperation in regional development. Working together, and sometimes learning together, about the process of development, the Government of Afghanistan and United States AID missions created the economic and social conditions necessary for agricultural development. Together spending more than $175,000,000, Afghans and Americans built the basic infrastructure — a road system, two major storage dams, main canals and laterals, and drainage, ditches. A hospital was built and schools expanded. An agricultural extension service was created. A modern technology — new seeds and the use of fertiliser, was transeferred. An administrative structure, the Helmand-Arghandab Valley Authority (HAVA) took form and began to direct the development of the region.

The Afghan Government, for its part, was driven, not only by the need to meet the food requirements of its own people, but by the dream of recreating the rich agricultural society which archaeologists believed existed in the Helmand Basin thousands of years ago. There had been precedents for international cooperation in the Helmand Valley. Forty years ago German and Japanese technicians worked on canal improvements until the outbreak of World War Two caused their departure. Afghanistan continued with canal building during the war and added another 26 kilometers before 1945.

Convinced of the promise of the Helmand region, in 1946 the Government of Afghanistan contracted with the American engineering firm of Morrison-Knudsen to begin construction of diversion dams and irrigation canals. Two United States Export-Import Bank loans totalling $39.5 million dollars permitted the Afghan Government to continue the contract through the 1950's and to complete much of the irrigation system, including construction of a storage dam in the nearby Arghandab Valley. Work on drainage continues to this very day.

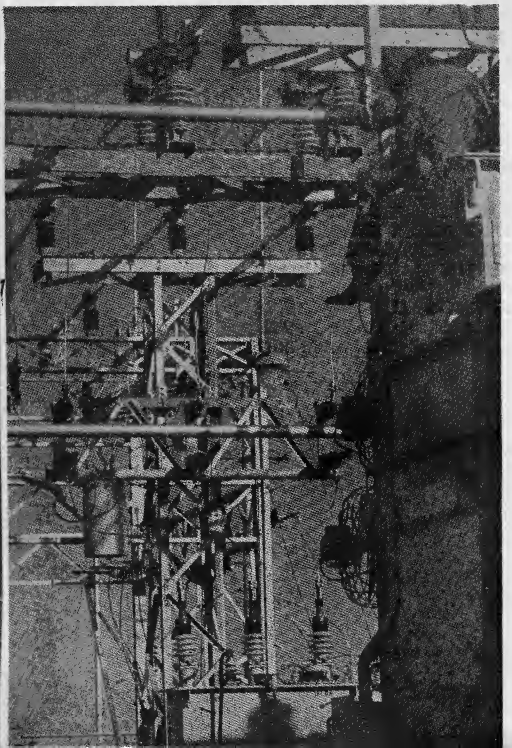
The major storage dam, the Kajaki on the Upper Helmand River, guarantees an adequate supply of water for irrigation throughout the rainless summer, permitting widespread double cropping. The Kajaki storage capacity of 1.7 million cubic meters, to be expanded to 2.9 cubic meters with the installation of new gates on the Kajakai Dam, means that Helmand Valley farmers will still have water in drought years, as they did in 1971 when the rest of the country was parched.

Facilities were limited in the Helmand Valley when the project began and a basic infrastructure had to be developed. At the start Morrison-Knudsen had to pave the road from Speen Bouldak to Kandahar, and from Kandahar, into the Helmand region in order to bring heavy equipment into landlocked Afghanistan. American asistance financed a paved road linking Kandahar with Kabul and helped build a road tying the Helmand region together. Two hydroelectric generators at Kajakai have begun to supply power needs of Lashkar Gah and Kandahar, and provide a potential for major industrial development. A United States Public Health Service grant funded construction of a 50-bed hospital in Lashkar Gah. Under a current program, 29 elementary schools will be constructed in the Helmand Province to expand the region's school system.

Persuading traditional farmers to try new methods and invest their scarce resources in fertiliser and improved seeds is a long, complex and often frustrating task. To bring a modern agricultural technology to the Helmand Valley, an extension service has been developed.

In 1952, the International Cooperative Administration (predecessor of the United States Agency for International Development— USAID) opened a training center in Nad-i-Ali for agricultural extension workers. The Center began by training eight graduates of the Agricultural Technical High School in Kabul. In the spring of 1953 the entire upper class spent the final four and one-half months of the school year in Nad-i-Ali for on-site training. In succeeding years graduates came to the Valley for training. In 1955 the Center began the training of village level workers. The center is still in operation with 80 extension workers travelling about the valley training farmers in new methods and assisting with their problems.

Change in agricultural practices came very quickly to the Helmand Valley once it began. The first demonstration plots of high yielding varieties of wheat were established in 1967. By 1972, more than half the wheat planting in the region were high yielding varieties, and



EXTREME LEFT: THE WALLS OF THE SOUTHERN PALACE, BUILT BY SULTAN MAHMUD AND HIS SON SULTAN MASOUD, STILL STAND AS MUTE TESTIMONY TO THE EARLY RICHES OF THE VALLEY.

LEFT: A TECHNICIAN PUTS SOME FINISHING TOUCHES ON A NEW ELECTRIC POWER SUBSTATION IN THE CITY OF KANDAHAR.

THE REWARDS OF YEARS OF INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY IN THE HELMAND VALLEY INCLUDE INCREASING HARVESTS AND PRIDE IN ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAT LEAD TO A RICHER LIFE.

in some areas the percentage ran as high as 85 to 95 percent. Cotton planting increased from 28,000 jeribs in 1972 to 58,000 jeribs in 1973, while production of cotton seed in the region jumped to 11,000 tons up from 3,500 tons the previous year. Double cropping grew by a factor of two or three between 1964 and 1970.

The use of fertilizer, which is one of the experts' indices of the level of modernization of agriculture, jumped from 218 tons in 1963 to 5447 tons in 1970. In 1970, 22 percent of the Helmand farmers used fertiliser as compared to a 1973-74 rate for the rest of the irrigated cropland in the country of only five to six percent.

As a pioneer project in regional development, the Afghan-American effort in the valley has had its share of problems, the most persistant of which has been salinization of the land. As John Geter, a US Soil Conservation Service specialist working in Lashkar Gah points out, all irrigated land has the possibility for salinization. The Imperial Valley in California, the Colorado River bottoms and other irrigated lands in the United States have all gone through periods where the salts left behind by the irrigation waters made the land increasingly less productive. In the United States, federal and state governments have directd programs of drainage to restor salty land to its former productivity. In Afghanistan, USAID missions have been working with HAVA on drainage programs which will reduce soil salinity and raise production levels further.

In a new Central Helmand Drainage program, HAVA's construction arm, the Helmand Construction Company (HCC) is embarked on a long—term, comprehensive drainage program. The United States is committed to finance up to $1,081,000 of the planned drainage work of Phase I of a multiphased project.

The most lasting accomplishment of 25—years of Afghan—American cooperation is probably the creation of a human infrastructure. Many of the administrators, engineers and technicians who manage HAVA and HCC today were trained in the period when the United States was extending technical assistance. Some received university or graduate education in the United States. Others, trained in the Helmand Valley, now staff development projects elsewhere in Afghanistan.

The HAVA Research Department, heavily involved in the introduction of new wheat varieties in the late 1960's and early 1970's carries on work in the development of high yield varieties suited to the local conditions. For example, it is studying the potential for introducing improved ble and fruit varieties. The Research Department continues to maintain the Bolan Research Station and three substations manned by graduates of the Kabul University Faculty of Agriculture.

Livestock improvement, first begun with the import of 18 Brown Swiss cows from the United States in the 1950's. Crossbred with local cows, the Brown Swiss proved well adapted to local conditions and give three times the milk as a local cow Ghulam Sidique Haris, Director of the HAVA Livestock Departemnt, recalls that local farmers didn't like the crossbreeds when they first saw them. Now they are willing to pay up to Afs. 25,000 for a crossbreed while local cows can command only Afs. 6,000 to 7,000. The Department maintains a dairy farm near Lashkar Gah and is building a second farm in the nearby Marja development area. It continues an artificial insemination program begun five years ago, and carries on demonstration programs in animal husbandry practices.

The momentum of land settlement has intensified in recent years, reflecting the Government of Afghanistan's effort to find employment for nomads and other landless people. Prior to 1974, 6,000 families were settled on new lands in the Helmand Valley, in 1974—75 alone, 3,317 were settled, and in 1975—76, another 1,359 have been settled.

With the basic social and economic prerequisites some observers believe that the greatest achievements in the Helmand Valley are yet to come. Drainage experts predict that as adequate drains are constructed on all the land, crop production, without any other inputs, can be expected to grow by 50 percent. Improved techniques, efficient use of water, better adapted plant varieties and wider practice of double cropping can be expected to expand production levels even further.

Double cropping more than doubled between 1964 and 1970, but with little more than ten percent of the land being double cropped, there is potential for even greater production. Additional land can also be brought under irrigation. To use the capacity of the Helmand and Arghandab waters to irrigate another 150,000 acres, the Government of Afghanistan is planning a new irrigation project at Chukhansur in the Lower Helmand.

Industrial development is a major spin—off from the construction of Kajakai Dam, which was originally built as a storage dam for irrigation. The Kajakai hydroelectric facility presently has a capacity of 33,500 kilowatts, which will be increased to 150,000 kilowatts. The power surplus, combined with the pool of trained technical workers give the Helmand—Arghandab Valley potential for major industrial development. The Province already has a number of industries, a ginnery, an oil seed mill, and a marble factory. Plans are in process for another cotton ginnery, a certified seed plant, and a sugar beet refinery.

Central Asia was the home of some of the world's earliest agricultural societies which, like the Tigris and Euphrates system, were dependent on extensive irrigation. Abandoned canals and widespread ruins throughout the valley area testify to the prosperous agricultural societies which have existed in the past.

Today, after 25 years of persistent efforts the age—old dream of recreating and surpassing ancient prosperity is being realized.

(BELOW): MAJOR DRAINAGE DITCHES, LIKE THIS ONE, WILL HELP TO ALLEVIATE THE SALINIZATION PROBLEM OF THE HELMAND VALLEY AND THEREBY INCREASE CROP YEILDS.

THE TREASURE OF BEGRAM

BY: DR. ZEMARYALAY TARZI

The relics, discovered before World War II in Begram area, are undoubtedly of the most significant archaeological finds in Afghanistan. The discovery, made by a French archaeological team, between 1937 and 1939, include a number of relics which are known today as "The Treasure of Begram".

The collection include ivory, metal, glass, lac and gypsum materials that had been brought to Begram from the Eastern Mediterranean region, India and China through the trade route which then existed and India, Egypt, Syria and China exchanged their products through this same route.

"The Treasure of Begram", on the basis of studies carried out by distinguished archaeologists, belongs to the 1st century A.D. On the ground of these studies, the discovered relics were gathered in Begram during the reign of Vima Kadphizes and Kanishka. There are also another group of historians and archaeologists who believe that Begram, as the summer capital of the Koshanid kings, was one of the well-known cities of the time, and as the excavations carried out by the renowned French scholar, R. Ghirshman, indicate, Begram by the first half of the second century A.C., that is to say, before the Koshanid period during the Greek era of South Hindokush was a prosperous.

The existing historical documents emphasise the important role of Kapisa even before the second century B.C. As it has been mentioned in some documents, the people of this area launched a series of resistence movements against Cyrus the Achaemnid emperor during the sixth century B.C. However, the first obvious remarks on Kapisa were made in the fourth century A.D. by the prominent Sanskrit etymologist, Panini, who lived at the vicinity of Atak on the confluence of Kabul and Sind rivers. Later on, during the seventh century A.D. the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuan-Tsang, visited Kapisa and wrote remarkable notes about the city and the area.

The historians and the geographists of the Middle Ages have spoken about Kabul instead of Kapisa which was a main trade and administrative center of the region in its time. The last scholar who has used the name of Kapisa in his writings is Al-Bironi.

There is not sufficient information about the spot where the city of Begram was exactly located. And the present place which is called Begram might have been a new nomination. This place which is often called Burj-e-Abdullah, and is located on the juncture of Ghourband and Panjsher rivers, has also no relation with Alexanderia of Caucasus which should be sought somewhere in Jabalusseraj.

The Treasure of Begram, as said before, include artistic articles and artitacts of the time and they could be classified as the following:

(1) Luxurious effects like ivory thrones in the style of the Indian famous artistic schools, Amaravarti and Mathura, which have no precedent in the world. The decorative carvings of these furnitures reflect the daily scenes of life of ancient India, and can be counted as the brilliant manifestations of the Indian artists. These furnitures not only display the artistic styles of the time but also shed light on the structures of buildings, details of women's jewelry and the human anatamy. They present comprehensive data about some flowers and plants.

(2) Metals which mainly include small and large bronze statutes. The statues bear characteristics of the Helenistic art of the Mediterranean region. These articls, as scholars believe, can be linked to the artistic schools of Alexanderia. The Treasure of Begram also include a number of metal dishes and plates that are archaeologically of great significance.

(3) The glass utensils of the Treasure of Begram are universally as famous as its ivory relics. These glass utensils which are thought to have been made in Alexanderia or, perhaps, Syria, archaeologically are of considerable value, for in no other pace so many of such utensis have so far been discovered. The utensils, made in a variety of forms and by different technics, carry coloured decorations and are considered very helpful means for study of the artistic complexities of the artistic schools of the Mediterranean region.

(4) About fifty gypsum casts have been discovered in Begram which mainly include embossed works depicting faces of the Greek gods. Some of these monuments show scenes in half-embossed forms.

Some historians think these gypsums have come from Alexnderia, but the idea that they might have come from the northern parts of the country, such as Ai-Khanum, also remains acceptable.

(5) The Chinese lac pieces are also worth-mentioning in the Treasure of Begram. These lac pieces have directly come from China and belong to the first century A.D..

As it was mentioned before, the products of different civilised regions have been found in Begram beside each other. This is a reason proving that the Koshanid civilisation was a meeting spot of all these great civilisations, and the Koshanid Emperors in the light of their peaceful policy and vast cultural relations with others, could place themselves in the crossroad of these cultural exchanges and managed to administer and control the the trade route in their own benefit.

ILLUSTRATIONS

FOREGOING PAGE: AN IVORY STATUE OF A WOMAN STANDING ON A "MAKARA", A MARINE ANIMAL THE ANATOMY OF THE BODY, DESIGN OF CLOTHES, DETAILS OF JEWELRY, AND THE SPECIAL HAIR STYLE INDICATE THAT THE STATUE, UNDOUBTEDLY, BELONGS TO ONE OF THE INDIAN ARTISTIC SCHOOLS, NAMELY, AMARAVARTI OR MATHURA. THE STATUE BELONGS TO THE KABUL MUSEUM.

ABOVE: THE GYPSUM CAST SHOWING A YOUNG GREEK. PERHAPS, THE CAST WAS HUNG ON THE WALL AS A DECORATIVE ARTICLE FOR THERE IS SEEN A HOLE ON THE RIGHT SECTION OF THE TOP. THE BEAUTIFUL RELIC BELONGS TO THE KABUL MUSEUM.

OPPOSITE PAGE,

TOP: AN IVORY PIECE DEPICTING SCENES OF THE DAILY LIFE OF INDIA IN THE FIRST CENTURY A.D. THE FIGURES HAVE BEEN WORKED IN A SEMI—EMBOSSED STYLE. THIS ARTICLE ALSO BELONGS TO THE KABUL MUSEUM.

MIDDLE: A SMALL BRONZE STATUE OF HARPOCRATE SON OF ISIS AND SERAPIS. WEARING A "PSHENT" ON HIS HEAD, HE IS POINTING ABOVE BY HIS RIGHT HAND. THE STATUE REPRESENTS THE PNAXITELE SCHOOL. THE STONE, CLAY AND BRONZE STATUES OF THIS PERSONALITY ARE WELL—KNOWN IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION. A SIMILAR PATTERN HAS BEEN DISCOVERED IN TAXILA. THE STATUE BELONGS TO THE KABUL MUSEUM.

LEFT: AN IVORY PIECE WHICH WAS FIXED TO A FURNITURE BY METAL NAILS. THE ARTICLE SHOWS ANOTHER STYLE OF IVORY WORKS OF BEGRAM IN WHICH THE FIGURES ARE NOT PRESENTED IN THE EMBOSSED FORM BUT ONLY THE LINES HAVE BEEN CARVED. THE PIECE BELONGS TO THE KABUL MUSEUM.

RIGHT: A SMALL BRONZE CAST OF SILENE WEARING EMBELLISHMENTS OF FLOWERS AND LEAVES A DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERESTIC OF THE HELENISTIC ART. THE ARTICLE BELONGS TO THE KABUL MUSEUM THE PHOTO HAS BEEN TAKEN BEFORE CLEANING AND REPAIR OF THE CAST. ...

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*** COBALT—60 ***

With copletion of the Cobalt-60 Project in the vicinity of Nader Shah Hospital, in Kabul, the radio active rays will be available for treating cancer in Afghanistan, said Director of the Project in an interview with the daily Anis. The Project will also open way for scientific research in this field.

The building of Cobalt-60 is being given finalizing touches. Special ray-resistant materials have been used in the construction of the building which includes X-ray room, rooms for Cobalt-60 equipments and other purposes.

The construction work of the Project, started in 1975, will be completed very soon. The Afghan Construction Unit will carry out a series of tests to find out the resistance of the building against the Gama and X-rays. After receiving the approval of the International Atomic Energy Organisation, the building will be handed over to the Kabul University.

The resistance rate of the building, according to the Director of the Project, has been envisaged equivalent to 6,000 Curies. The equipments of this Gamatherapy center have been provided by the Hungarian government through the International Atomic Energy Organization.

Afghanistan's National Commission of Atomic Energy with the agreement of the International Atomic Energy Organization will participate in completing the technological machinery and equipments of the Project, and in providing the technical personnel who will include a number of doctors and physiologists. The construction expense of the Project has been met by the Kabul University.

*** MILAN TRADE FAIR ***

Afghanistan for the first time participated in the International Trade Fair held in Milan, Italy, from April 14 to 23, with a separate information office.

A source of the Commerce Ministry said to the Bakhtar News Agency correspondent that the main objective of attending this international fair was to study the possibilities of finding markets for Afghan products in Italy and other European countries. The Milan International Fair was one of the biggest world fair attended by more than 9792 institutes.

Afghanistan which is famous for its handicrafts, had displayed several products including boxes carved with stones, sculptures of lapis lazuli, leather handicrafts, textiles, clothings, and several other items.

Afghan products attracted a large number of Italian and other European buyers who had participated in the fair. Afghan delegation at the fair met a number of Italian businessmen and firms who proposed joint investment in Afghanistan.

Photo below shows Afghanistan's room in the Milan Trade Fair.

COOPERATIVES DEVELOP-MENT

According to the projected plan, 22 new primary and secondary agricultural cooperatives will be established in twelve provinces during the current Afghan Year, 1977-78. A source of the Agricultural Cooperative Department of the Agriculture Ministry talking to the Kabul Times reporter said since the start of its

KEEPING COOL IN SUMMER

BY. ABDUL HAQ WALEH

Afghanistan is endowed with a variety of climates. Since high mountains abound, straddling almost the whole country, two places not so far apart may have surprisingly different climates. The case in point is Kabul and Paghman. While the citizens of Kabul may be perspiring under a 38 degree sunshine in July or August, people in Paghman which is only 27 kilometers to the west of the capital enjoy weather with the mercury not rising higher than, say, 18 degrees Centigrade.

As man has always been subjected to climatic extremes, his ingenuity has protected him from severities of Nature through centuries by building shelters, making suitable clothes or the warming or cooling effects of foods and drinks. Gadgets and devices have been invented by man in the course of time to improve his living conditions. These may range from central heating system to air conditioning, but the fun of "overcivilised" man has been spoiled in recent years through the energy crisis. As the common man could not afford central heating or air conditioning at home anyway, this has affected only those in higher brackets.

Now let us see how a common man in Afghanistan manages to keep cool in summer.

CROSS VENTILATION

Though the people in rural areas do not realise the principle behind this, local architects or even ordinary builders who construct customary campounds known as "qalas" often leave holes in the campound walls which serve in case of emergencies as fortifications to defend the inmates. When on one side of the wall, a room happens to be built especially if the wall is located on the northern side of the campound, the hole is utilized to pump fresh air into the room and drive out the used one through the windows.

However, one drawback spoils the fun in this and other rooms. And that is the windows are not usually screened to bar the flies. And thousands of them swarm in each campound where nobody cares to move a limb to scare them let alone killing these.

Flies roam around on grains, vegetables, fruits and anything under the sun. The fact that they are enjoying a complete freedom is due to superstition. Or perhaps to Bhuddist philosophy that calls for humane treatment of all creatures. And a large number of the people in this country had gone Bhuddist before the advent of Islam.

That is why villagers usually believe if they kill a fly, they will be accountable to God and be penalised. This may range from going to limbs to being burned alive in this world where punishments are inflicted on humans almost daily but very few people realise this. According to Bedel, a famous Dari poet-philosopher, "if the eyes are able to see the truth, everyday is a doomsday". Moslems believe God passes judgement on all humans on this particular day and Mohammad tries to intercede on behalf of the poor sinners so that he could get almost all his followers pardoned.

At any rate, a common man does not molest a fly not to incur God's wrath but he may slay another human not because he is ferocious or a born killer but due to the fact that he happens to be impulsive or easily ignitable or because his honor is at stake. There is a score of reasons behind the various forms of murders and manslaughters or whatever we may call them. And the reasons may be psychological which are so much emphasised in the US and other advanced nations.

If we compare which reason is more socially dominant, we may jump to the conclusion that the ways in which children are brought up should be responsible for killing, only the modes differs in different societies. In the advanced ones, killing becomes more sophisticated. In the backward ones, it is crude and clumsily done which leaves incriminating evidences to entrap the culprits.

FANNING

At any rate, we were going to deal with cooling not killing. And there are two main types of fans, those which are operated by hands and others turned by water current.

In the old days, a very important person like high government official or a patriarch from the landed gentry was fanned by two men standing behind while his worship rested comfortably on a fat mattress guzzling goodies.

Under special arbours known as "Kharkhana", which is literally translated as "the house of thorns", very important persons owning the whole area used to lie down lazily with breeze stroking their fat bodies. And this breeze was created by turning a huge fan operated through the water current from the nearby brook.

In the case of the majority, one can see in almost each campound, if not in each room, a fan made of straw with a wooden handle usually dyed red. This is used by the important person in the household or the guest in scaring away the flies if not in cooling his body because the amount of breeze so created is insufficient. It may only help changed the temperature of the face.

In hot areas like Ningarhar and Laghman, nights are steamy and villages infested with mosquitoes. Though spraying against larvea has drastically reduced the number of these nocturnal vampires, yet there is enough to make any Kabuli, for instance, grumble or even curse, oohing and aahing the night away. The most usual way in which they make these long nights seem short is to give themselves a break through soaking a large sheet into the nearby brook and wear it for at most half an hour untill it is dried and the heat engulfes the poor souls. again.

The small straw fan comes in handy in such times as the mosquitoes are really scared by it moving to and for in a monotonous way as anger and frustration build up in the man trying to go to sleep but not allowed to do so by creatures so tiny and indefensible that hundreds of them could be reduced to dust under one's feet, if caught so easily.

By the way, a charlatan who was planning to get rich quick began to advertise, of course orally in the absence of mass media, an effective medicine to kill bed bugs. As almost all the citizens were plagued by the scourge, people were pouring in to buy this cure which was nothing but quick lime. An ounce of this white powder was sold for, say, a dollar. One of the customers who proved more thoughtful than others asked the vendor as to the direction for using this miraculous stuff. The charlatan who was not expecting those simpletons to ask such a question said they had to catch the bugs first and then put some of the stuff into their eyes. So to catch or not to catch, that was the question!

COOL DRINKS

Afghans as staunch Moslems abhor alcoholic beverages as a whole. However, the majority especially those living in hot areas like Kandahar, Nimroz, Helmand, Ningarhar, Laghman, etc. consume lots of butter-milk in summer to keep cool. In Kandahar city, one comes across almost everyone on the street carrying a bowl of yoghurt home in order to trun it into butter-milk because the by product obtained after producing butter is not supposed to be as good or as tasty, though villagers generally drink the latter.

Most families traditionally prepare marvellous cooling concoctions by mixing butter-milk produced from youghurt with crushed leaves of dried mint, dried rose petals of the fragrant kind, dried leaves of another herb called "kakoti."

Yoghurt is made into a fine paste by a spoon, then it is diluted with cool water. One or two cucumbers are peeled and chopped into small pieces the size of peas. The mint, rose and kakoti leaves as well as some salt are added. This concoction proves very healthy and refreshing because those who have devised each ingredient have thought about their qualities which are meant to neutralise the undesirable after-effects of the butter-milk.

For instance, butter-milk is thought by traditional medicine men to be cool in nature and those who eat it almost through summer with their meals tend to become sexually impotent after a period of say five years. Besides, youghurt and butter-milk, especially the latter taken alone may harm the system. In villages, butter-milk is produced by churning lots of yoghurt inside special clay pots the shape of cylinders with one small and one large hole. The small hole lets the air in or out while the large one is used for pouring the yoghurt in and taking the butter and butter-milk out. However, someone has got to sit there all the time to push and pull the container till the butter is separated form the yoghurt.

In other areas, people may use a skin for this purpose. In Nooristan and other mountainous places where clay pots are not available but there is plenty of animals to skin, the latter is sewn into handy sacks to serve the same purpose. The clay pots are called "shir zana" or "jug" but I do not remember what the Nooristanis or Kochis call that particular skin.

Again in the villages, where no clay pots are available immediately, yoghurt is poured into cloth sacks with a string around them. The string is tied to a branch of tree away from the access of children because they love to suck a corner of the sack to get some drink. Drops of a bluish liquid fall down from two corners of the sack and gradually kill the tree especially when it is young.

The villagers warn one another that what the butter-milk does to a tree may do it to human as well. So the herbs mixed with it are intended to weaken its effects while not detracting anything from its cooling effects. However, most villagers who come home from the fields for lunch dog-tired do not care about the after-effects of this cool drink and gulp glasses of it before or after their meals and afterwards go to sleep like babies.

Actually almost all villagers form the majority of our people take their naps after lunch, some of them who are rather well-to-do take a two hour siesta. Others suffice to have a half hour nap and then go back to work on their fields. The butter-milk consumed on a vast scale serves as the most reasonably priced and most effective sleeping pills one can imagine. Besides, an overdose does not kill anyone.

CLAY JUGS

In both Kandahar and Logar, clay water jugs and pitchers are made to cool the water people drink almost all day. Everyone buys one or two from potteries or small shops, fills it with water early in the morning when the water in the spring or stream is cool and pure enough, puts the jug on a spot where it is cooled through fresh air under the shade. The breezier the air, the cooler the water becomes. In Kandahar and Mazar where drinking water usually come from rather deep wells, water is cool enough to start with. These jugs are only placed in cellars. In other places, jugs are kept in the open but covered through shades, natural or artificial.

To give the reader an idea as to how much butter-milk is consumed in this country, one should say this may be comparable with the amount of beer gulped in West Germany per capita. The difference is of course that butter-milk does not make one fat. It only cools off the system. The fact that it makes you drowsy does not detract from its qualities. Actually, it is meant to send one to sleep for the siesta which proves very healthy for the digestive system.

But those who like beer may reprimand me for saying so because beer has got some vitamins, especially vitamin B and this may prove my ignorance. However, as a traditionalist, I am prepared to accept that. But the critics should prepare the famous Afghan "dogh" once according to the prescription given in this article and I am sure they will like it after an initial try providing that they get a nap otherwise they should forget about it. Actually working without resting is pretty unhealthy and a man in his right mind should always think about his health because no amount of wealth can replace it after it starts deteriorating seriously.

ASIFFI, HIS MOMENTS OF PRIDE

BY: AZIMULLAH

M. YAHYA ASIFFI

A photography exhibition was held at the French Cultural Center in late April in which a collection of 51 photos, by the young Afghan photographer Yahya Asiffi, had been put on display.

Mohammad Yahya Asiffi 31—year—old, is a self—made artist who aimes to portray the different aspects of life and the characteristics of people of Afghanistan through photographs "I haven't had any schooling in this field," says Asiffi. "What I know, comes from books and photography magazines. My interest in photography and my persistent efforts in this work are the only factors for my success in this artistic line".

Asiffi made his debut in 1965 with participation in a photography contest the result of which showed a good photographer was in the making. He won the First Press Award. This success convinced him that he had the necessary talent for becoming a good photographer. But future had more success in its wake, and in 1970 and 1974 the Press Awards again went to him.

Since 1965, Assifi has held forteen exhibitions inside Afghanistan. Moreover, he has taken part in two exhibitnoins outside the country—at EXPO 70 in Japan and in the Soviet Union.

Asiffi, a graduate of Habibia High School, is married and has two children. "The most pleasant moment of life for me", he says, "is that when after developing the films, I print the negatives and in the red light of the darkroom I find out that I've captured a delicate human feeling, beauty or action. At such a moment, I feel proud, like a conqueror".

Artistic creation is, indeed, a conquest which does not come easily. Its reguisite as Asiffi believes, first of all, in addition to a talent, is artistic touch and taste. Moreover, it requires an iron determination and hard work. Finally, an artist must consistently follow his line.

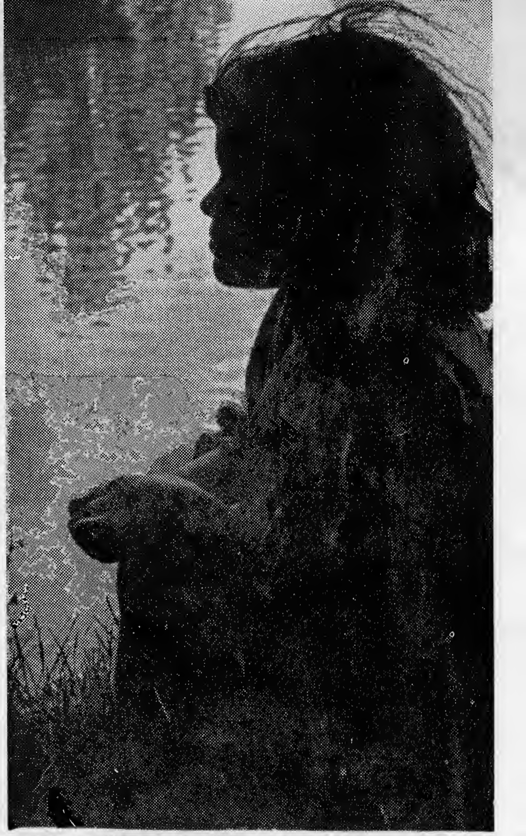
In our world of today, according to Asiffi, complicated developments have occured in the sphere of arts in width and depth. Consequently, a variety of branches have come into being in each single art, and it has made it impossible for an artist to master all branches existing in his field of art. For instance, we can count the branches in photography as anatomic photography, commerical photography, landscape photography, historical photography, portrait, jurnalistic photography and the like. And photographers are correspondingly divided. There are a number of essential features and characteristics which make work of each branch different from the rest.

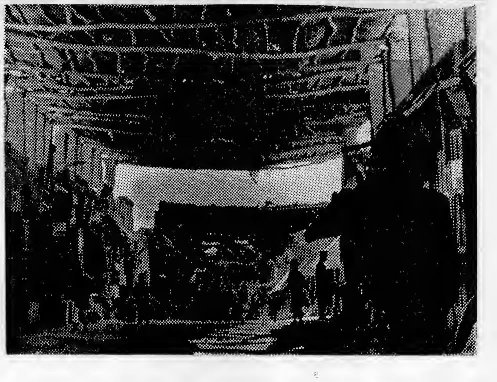
To explain the matter, he says, lets again take two branches of photography, say, journalistic and commerical photographies. The most important elements in journalitic photography are speed and reaction of photographer towards the subject that does not behave according to the photographer's wish. In the commerical photography, speed is not at stake at all. The commercial photographer has plenty of time to spend over his work which should necessarily produce a desirable effect on the viewer and influence his potential decision.

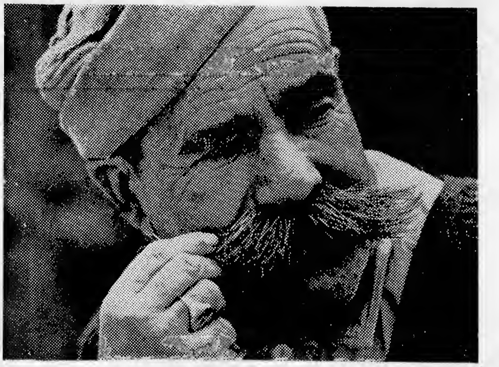
Instead all these differences, Asiffi says, what makes all branches of photography to come together in a single circle, is technique and use of similar instruments.

Personaly, Asiffi is more interested in portrait photography. "Portraits" he believes", "communicate photographer's message even in a span, and the viewer can concieve it easier".

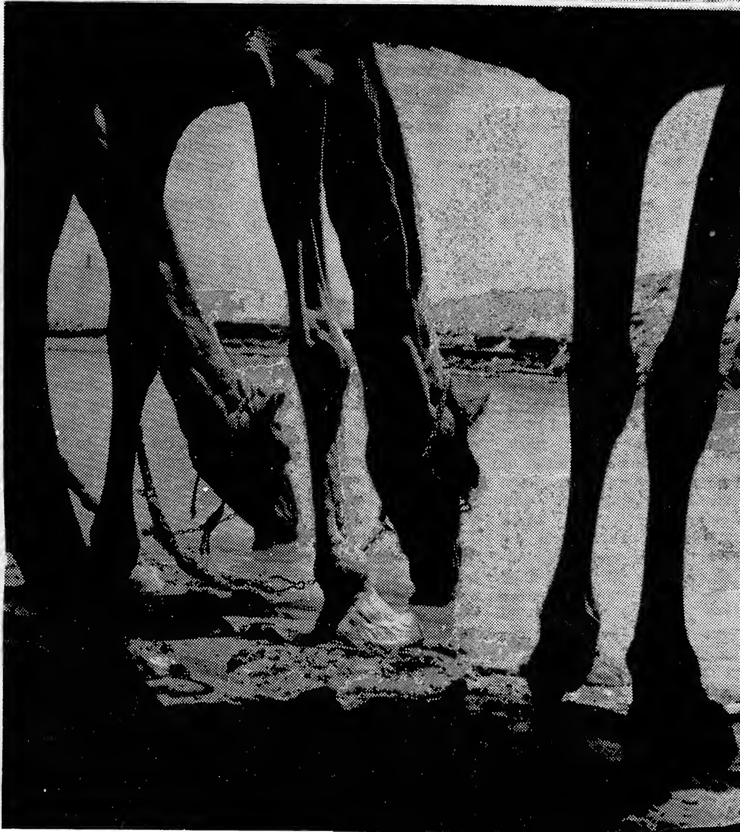
Asiffi intends to produce a book on Afghanistan "which will depict the beauties of this land, and will include 30% words and 70% various photos." Moreover, he aims to establish a laboratory of printing colour photos that will be the first computerised laboratory of its kind in the country. "These will be remarkable artistic achievements in my part", he maintains.

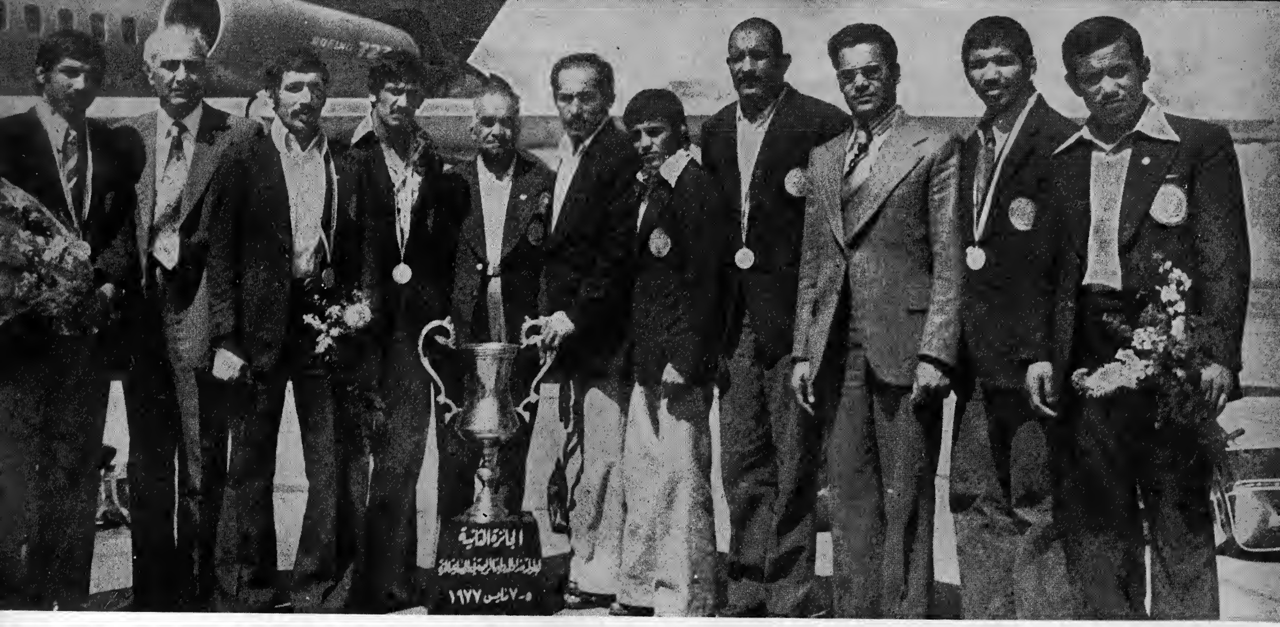






SOME OF THE BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS CAPTURED BY ASIFFI. THESE SHOTS HAVE CAUSED ASIFFI TO FEEL PRIDE LIKE A CONQUEROR.





FROM BAGHDAD WITH GOLDS

BY: AFZAL NASIR

The wrestling team of Afghanistan made history recently by bagging five gold and three silver medals in the Fourth Baghdad International Wrestling Tournament this year. The team returned after more than a week's stay and remarkable performance in Iraq to a heros welcome at the Kabul International Airport. Thousands of Kabul citizens had thronged the airport to have a glimpse of their favourite grapplers.

Winning of a gold medal in an international tournament by Afghan wrestlers was merely a dream not very long ago and the first breakthrough was achieved only last year, that too, in Baghdad, when Afghanistan's Nasir Ali pinned down his opponent in the finals. That was the beginning of a very bright future which awaits our sportsmen specially wrestlers. To many Afghans it was one of the most emotional moments when Nasir Ali climbed on the victory stand and wore the gold medal. This memory is still fresh in our mind.

The 1977 Baghdad International Wrestling Championship was participated by 72 wrestlers from four countries namely Iraq (hosts), Afghanistan, Indonesia and Libya. The eight member Afghan team entered in seven classes and fought a total of 29 bouts suffering only three reversals. The host nation Iraq had fielded 50 wrestlers in different weights and consequently won five gold, three silver and three bronze medals and so also the championship on the basis of higher number of points and medals. The second spot won by Afghanistan is by no means a minor achievement it is an unprecedented feate and marvellous improvement during the last few years when Afghanistan used to stand no where in international meets.

1976 in the history of Afghan wrestling is a silver lining. The team did much better than ever in all international tournaments it participated. In Pakistan it won gold and silver medals and again in Iran and Soviet Union gave an improved display after its return from the Baghdad competition.

The leap forward in wrestling has been made possible by relentless efforts on the part of the Afghan Olympic Committee and the direct patronage of the national leader who honoured the wrestlers by receiving them at the Presidential Palace after a successful participation in Pakistan's international wrestling tournament.

According to the manager of the Afghan werstling team who accompanied it to Baghdad, Farid Shaya, the team had its anxious moments more often than not but did not wilt under any pressure. Reminiscing one such moment Shayan said Ghulam Sakhi in 74 kilogram weight lifted his opponent above his head during the gold fight and dropped him down with a bang on the canvas, his opponent Salah Mehdi of Iraq the next moment pierced his teeth in Sakhi's thighs. However the Iraqi wrestler was disqualified and barred for a year from international competition. Ghulam Sakhi was awarded the gold medal.

Another interesting incident occurred when Shujauddin faced the seasoned Iraq boxer Noman in the 82 kilograms final. Shuja conceded the fight to the superior and crafty Iraqi before the fight could begin and thus managed only a silver for his side. Sharifullah had to surrender during the finals against Walid Mansur of Iraq due to a sprained elbow in the semi-final bout.

The Afghans won their fights mostly on technical knock-out basis and did not allow their opponents to score points against them. For the Afghan boys this year's Iraqi international tournament at Baghdad was an unforgettable episode as most of them were pitted against opponents who had beaten them during last year's tournament. They thus avenged their defeats at the hands of Iraqis.

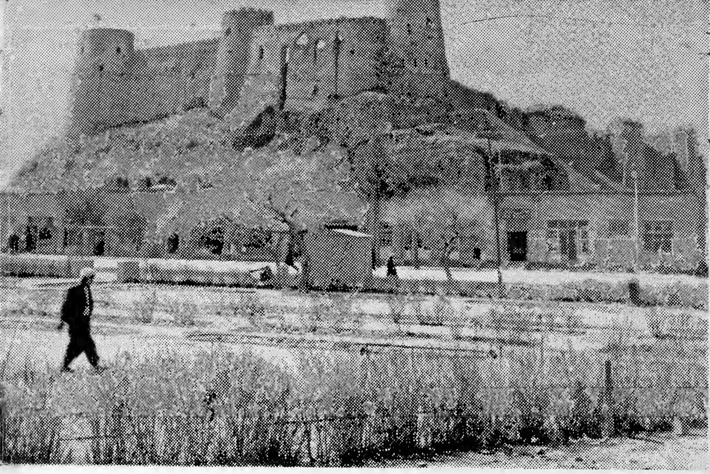
According to Shayan, Najaf Ali was the most outstanding wrestlers among all the competitors in the 48 kg. weight. His age, agility, swiftness and nimbleness was unmatched. At 18 Najaf Ali has what others achieve after twenty. If the young wrestler continues to improve as he has been doing so since the last year, in very near future he could become unbeatable in his class. Shayan also praised Nasir Ali, Ghulam Sakhi and Sakhi Dad and pinned his hope on them for bringing honours to Afghanistan in international and Asian tournaments in future.

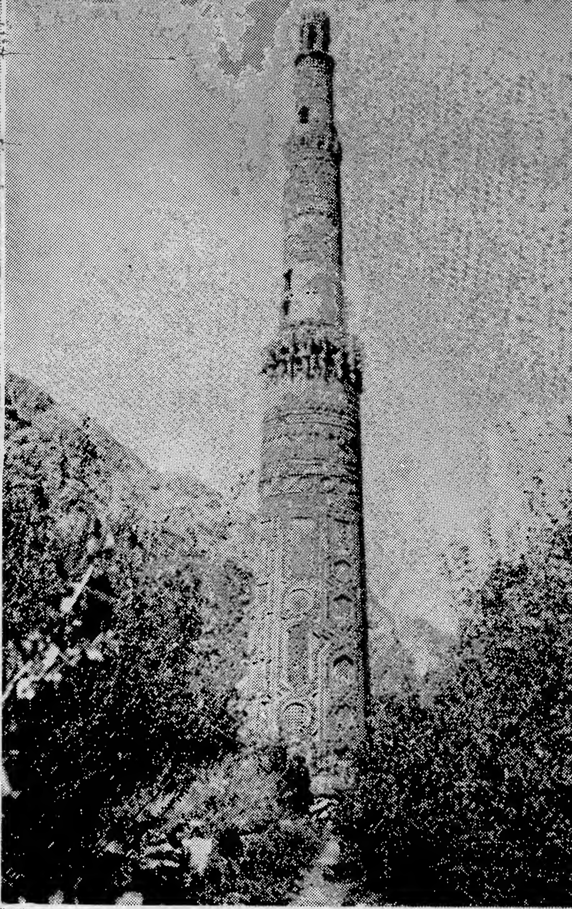
Although every year a national wrestling team selection tournament is held in the month of March and Jame Jamhouriat tournament in July during Jashen celebrations yet these are not sufficient for promoting of wrestling in the country. More local tournaments are essential for attracting youngmen to become versatile wrestlers, which should guarantee attractive prizes to the winners both in cash and kind. Increased number of foreign tours is also needed for promotion of wrestling in the country.

One would like to see this ancient sport of our country revived and occupy a prominent place among the leading wrestling nations of the world. This can only be possible by providing training to young boys at the school level. In today's world wrestling has changed its medieval character. The game has been well-shackled in rules and regulations and many terms have been coined for different actions which were not heard in the past.

To become a proficient wrestler not only a well built body is needed but also a healthy and efficient mind, and school graduates are most suitable to be groomed as wrestlers. No such long term plan exists at the moment in our country although there is a growing need for this.

The budding sportsmen in every field should be entitled for scholarships so that on one hand they are able to take a balanced diet and keep themselves fit and are also encouraged to maintain their interest in sports. Of late training of youth in football, hockey, basketball and volleyball has been introduced in schools by the Ministry of Education. Well versed trainers and coaches have also been made available in this regard but wrestling still needs a beginning.

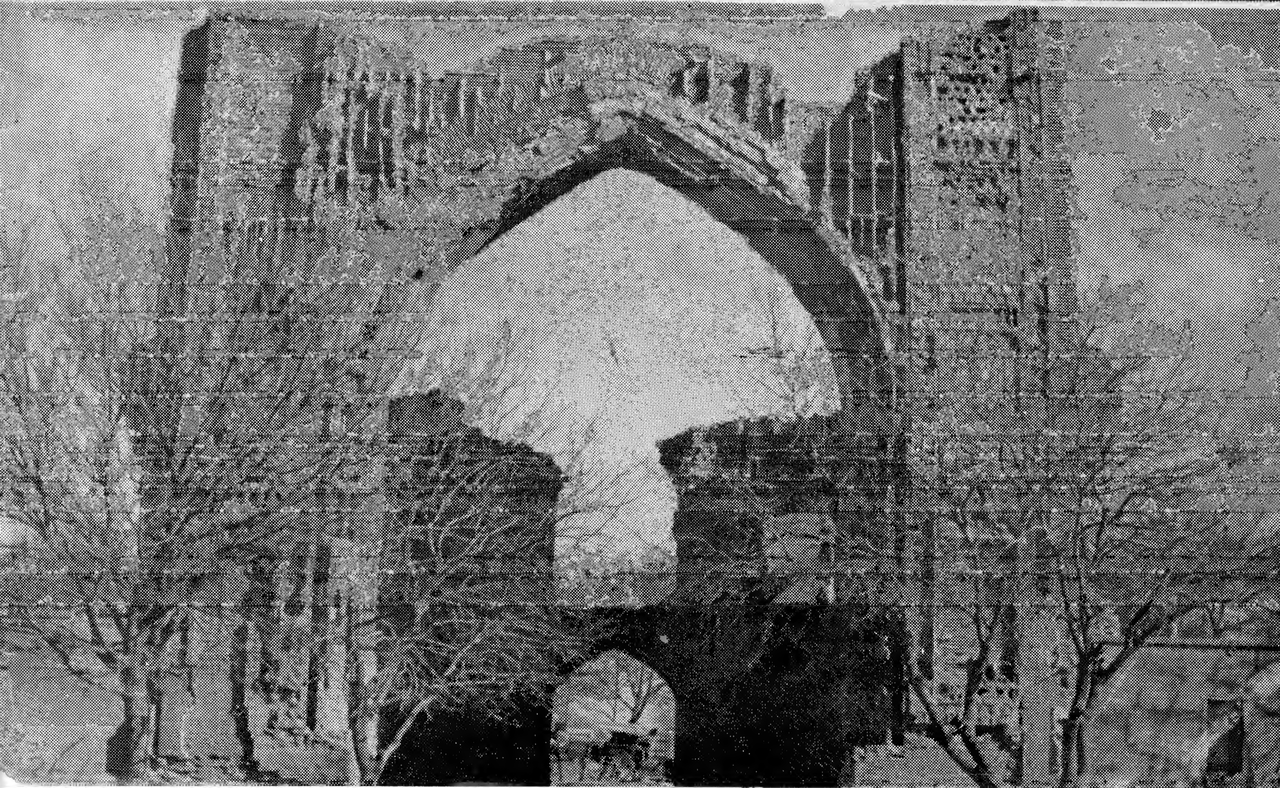




ARYANA

Photo-Album

PHOTOS SPEAK ON OUR HISTORY.
ABOVE: THE SITADEL OF HERAT.
RIGHT: THE MINARET OF JAAM.
BELOW: "MASJED-E-HAJ-PEYADAH", ONE OF THE OLDEST MOSQUES IN BALKH.



"FLYING HORSEMAN"
PHOTO BY
YAHYA ASIFFI
READ HIS INTERVIEW
ON PAGE 32.

operation, the Cooperative Development Department has registered 96 cooperatives and other six will be registered soon.

The membership in all cooperatives so far registered, has reached 9,925. Each cooperative, according to its objectives and charter, has different activities to perform, added the source.

Expounding on the advantages of the cooperatives, the source said that through the cooperatives the farmers can help each other and overcome their problems and difficulties.

The main objectives of the agricultural cooperatives are to increase the incomes and improve the living conditions of the members, to supply agricultural tools and the needed consumer goods and to help the members in marketting. The cooperatives also aim to provide facilities for functional literacy courses for the members, to increase the capital through local resources and to obtain credits from suitable foreign sources for achieving the cooperative goals, and to popularise the idea of cooperative among the members.

* * * NEW MENTAL HOSPITAL * * *

The foundation stone of Sanayee Mental Hospital was laid in early April by the Minister of Higher Education at the premises of Nader Shah Hospital. This new hospital to cost 21 million Afghanis, will be built under the seven-year development plan of the Republican State.

With the completion of Sanayee Hospital better facilities will be provided to the mental patients. The hospital will be equipped with electro-shock and electro-encephalography services, conference halls, one-bed, four-bed and eight-bed rooms with bathrooms attached. The hospital will also provide facilities to the students of Medical College during the intership.

The hospital will be manned by Afghan physicians and nurses to take care of the woman and men mental patients. So far, there is no plan to employ foreign doctors for Sanayee Mental Hospital. However, if the facilities are provided for employing foreign doctors under the affiliation agreement with France, the step will be taken in appropriate time.

* * * SAVING INCENTIVES * * *

The High Council of Da Afghanistan Bank, chaired by Finance Minister, has approved some facilities in banking and encouragement of savings by banks, reported the Bakhtar News Agency on May 18.

A source of Da Afghanistan Bank said in order to provide further facilities and encourage the savings and fixed deposit accounts for individuals and private firms, the Council has decided that annual interests for saving accounts should increase from 8% to 9 percent and interest rate for fixed deposit accounts of individuals and private firms, lasting six months, from 4 per cent to 9 per cent and fixed deposit accounts, lasting for one year, from 7 percent to 10 per cent a year.

The High Council of the Bank has also approved the abolition of stamp taxes for money transfer in the country. That is if people wish to transfer their money from center to provinces, and vice versa, through banks, they are exempted from paying stamp taxes. If such people have accounts with the banks, they will also be exempted from paying bank service charges.

The High Council has also decided that the check books be given to account-holders free of charge. Previously the account-holders paid for the check books.

In order to further encourage the holders of savings accounts, numerous prizes are also taken into consideration in addition to annual cash prizes given after raffling.

* * * AFGHANISTAN'S WILD LIFE * * *

A conservation coinage agreement on Afghanistan's wild life was signed in Kabul with World Wild Life Fund, reported the Bakhtar News Agency on April 2.

The agreement was signed for Afghanistan by State Minister Dr. Abdul Majid and for the WWF by His Royal Highness Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh, the Honourary President of British Appeal and International Trustee of World Wild Life Fund.

A source of the Finance Ministry said that on the basis of the agreement which is valid for five years, gold and silver coins will be minted by the WWF.

One side of the coin will bear the symbol of the Republic of Afghanistan, and the other side Marcopolo, Snow Leopard and Siberian Crane.

The Union will give the right of sale of the coins to Afghanistan. It is expected that the royalties to the tune of Afs. 30,000,000 from the sale of the coins will be used in financing programmes for preservation of wild life of Afghanistan.

* * * NEW POWER PLANT * * *

The Minister of Water and Power laid the foundation stone of the thermo-power plant of Kabul on April 6. "The increasing need for more energy is a reality of our life interlinked with the improvement of social and economic condition," he said at the ceremony.

Expounding on the technical aspects of the project, the Water and Power Minister thanked for the financial assistance of the World Bank, and expressed appreciation for contribution of the United Nations Development Programme in completion of technical and economic feasibility studies of the project.

The Kabul thermo-power plant, as the Bakhtar News Agency reports, consists of two gas turbines with a total capacity of more than 43,000 kws which will be built at the cost of more than Afs. 600 million.

Eighty one per cent of the expenditures of the project will be financed through ten million dollars long-term loan of the World Bank and 1.8 million dollars and Afs. 25 million, the remaining expenditure, will be financed through the State developmental budget.

The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of the current Afghan Year (mid March 1978) and will be connected to the Kabul power grids through transformer.

The plant will use locally produced crude oil as fuel.

* * * NEW TRANSMISSION LINE * * *

The Kajakai Power Transmission Line System was commissioned by Water and Power Minister in mid May, the Bakhtar News Agency reported.

Water and Power Minister, in a speech said, that the commissioning of the project, including the power station with 33,000 kws., and 219 km. long transmission lines with related sub-stations is considered as a major step in use of electric energy from Helmand River and providing power to Kandahar and Lashkargah cities.

He stated that it is hoped the success should be achieved in exploiting the maximum power capacity of Kajaki Dam according to the development plans of the State.

AFGHAN KARAKUL-A WORLD FASHION

BY: A. L. MOSADIQ

One of the products for which Afghanistan is known in the United States of America and the European countries, is Karakul pelt. Karakul sheep have been bred fore centuries in the northern parts of the country. Today, this traditional product of Afghanistan is well established in the western fashion world, and is increasingly attracting attention of the beauty-lovers.

Karakul sheep is one of the most useful animals of this land because it also provides wool for clothing and carpet making, meat for food, as well as, milk for cheese and butter.

Karakul, is a compound Turkish word, "Kara" meaning "Black" and "Qul" meaning "Curl".

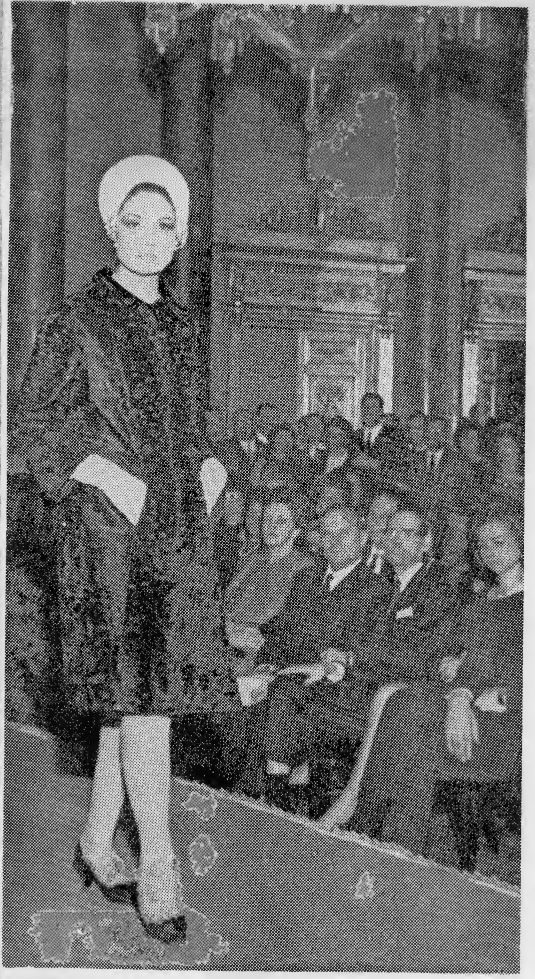
SOLD FOR GOLD

In the past centuries, people in northern Afghanistan used the Karakul pelts in somewhat different way: They sewed them on the inside of their chapans in order to protect themselves during the cold winters of the region. Later on, they got the idea that if they sewed the skins on the outside, this would improve the appearance of their garments. This was, of course, a significant event in the history of this product which caused people of other areas of the country to become interested in the material. Surely, this was a good beginning for the Karakul pelt to open its way in the markets outside Afghanistan and Russia was the first one.

In Russia, there was a small port on the Volga River, and the Afghans had Karakul skins taken to this port on the backs of camels. From there, the pelts were sent to the Russian main commercial centres or to the European countries. In return, gold pieces were brought to Afghanistan.

Another market through which the Afghan Karakul went to Russia and the European countries was inside Afghanistan in Andkhoy, a border town. The Russian merchants came to Andkhoy and bought the Afghan Karakul against golden coins.

In 1919, Karakul producers of Afghanistan made efforts for seeking new markets, and they found Peshawar. From then on some traders from Herat and northern provinces started sending Karakul skins to Britain through the Indian Sub continent



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AFGHAN KARAKUL-A WORLD FASHION

In 1929, the Afghan Ministry of Commerce opened a trading company in England. This operation soon died down because of the lack of knowledge in running the business.

In 1934, the Bank-e-Millie Afghan took this agency over from the Ministry of Commerce.

In 1936, skins were sent directly from Kabul to London instead of going through India.

In 1938, Sherkat-e-Karakul was formed to export skins to Europe.

In 1940, Britain went to war with Germany and the European market for the Afghan Karakul was closed because of difficulties in shipment. The Bank-e-Milli Afghan, therefore, opened a branch in New York for the exportation of Karakul. Consequently, the sale of Karakul shifted from Europe to the United States with fairly good and promising outcomes. In 1954, since there was a good market in London, Afghanistan Bank opened a branch there.

A MAJOR STEP

In 1960's, the industry suffered major setbacks. London and New York auction prices once exceeding $8.00 fell to a $5-$6.00. Simultaneously, demand declined from 1.5m. to just over one million skins. In consequence, convertible currency earnings dropped.

In such a depressed situation, a major step was taken, that is to say, the Afghan Karakul Institute came into being, "without funds, without staff and without equipment", as a source of the Institute indicates. "Its only asset—an abandunce of hope and an excellent leadership".

In consequence of the achievements of the Institute, with the passing of time, the hopes became reality. Auction prices in 1969 were up to an $8.00 range with gross sale increasing fron $10m. to $14.5m. and the year 1970 showed even better averages.

The Institute's achievements can be attributed to many factors, and perhaps the most importan of these were the following objectives set forth by its founding Board of Directors:

(1) To rebuild foreign buyers confidence in Afghan Karakul and in the method of selling it.

(2) To develop an organization in Afghanistan which would unite the industry and through which all its members could participate in the industry's improvement.

(3) To create the financial resources necessary to support the industry's development and to use these to its best advantage.

(4) To create a long—term improvement programme, and, upon approval of the Institute's members, to carry out this plan effectively.

REBUILDING FOREIGN BUYER CONFIDENCE

The international fur buyers know that Afghanistan has the climate, breeding stock, tradition and expertise to produce excellent Karakul, but untill 1966 quality skins were the exception rather than the rule. Buyers asked, "Why aren't fine pelts produced?" "Where are the grey skins?" "Why ae'nt more flat rib pattern available?" "Why are skins dusty?" "Why are auctions conducted like a bazzar?" And finally, "Why does no one listen to our complaints?"

Apparent lack of interest on the part of the shippers resulted in declining buyer confidence and falling prices. The Institute realized that top priority had to be given to the restoration of a satisfactory seller-buyer relationship which meant finding acceptable answers to all these questions. The Institute then proceeded to deal with them as follows:

(a) QUALITY OF PRODUCTION. Only 47% of the Karkul, auctioned in London and New York, was, first quality. The balance comprised second, third and four-

th qualities, defective skins and bagana (a cross-bred which is not real Karakul).

The Institue immdiately established a policy of auctioning only the top two qualities, and since 1968 non of the lower sections has come under the hammer.

(b) TYPE OF PRODUCTION. In the years before, Karakul exports were predominantly black with rather large curls, while the market demanded grey pelts with flatter, tighter curls and rib patterns.

This information was passed to flockowners and exporters, and for the first time these suppliers became aware of the true value of their product. Without any pressure other than this information, the results have been dramatic. Now, 65-70% of the crop is grey and 30—35% black. Originally the fine "Chaqmaqy" curls were neglible; today the crop comprises more than 100000 of there valuable pelts.

These two changes alone have earned remarkable sums for Afghanistan during the recent auction seasons.

(c) CLEANING OF SKINS. The Institute coped with this mater by incouraging the use of cleaner water and better washing standards in the curing houses. There, they were put through eleborate dust extracting machines. And as a result of these improved methods of handling the pelts, the dust problem has significanly reduced. However, the Institute is undertaking a number of experiments to perfect a more suitable method.

(d) SORTING AND GRADING OF SKINS. Although top quality skins are now being auctioned, unless the skins are properly sorted and graded, more than $1.00 per pelt can be lost. Furthermore, a buyer's confidence in this Afghan product can be shaken by poor presentation. The Institute recognized this problem and accordingly invested $135,000 in the construction of a new sorting-house in Kabul where they employed the best sorters and graders and instituted strict sorting policies.

(e) TRANSPORTATION OF SKINS. The London and New York Karakul auctions are held in September and November. Unfortunately, until the Institute was started, Afghanistan could never meet this auction schedule and in consequence, the skins were either offered in spring when there was low buyer demand, or else, held over for the next season and then classed as "old goods".

The Institute launched two programmes to solve this problem. Prior to its inception, it took six months, or even longer, to sort and grade the entire Afghan crop. It had then to be transported via land and sea either through Russia or Pakistan to reach London or New York. Both routes took 3—6 months. While it was a fact that freight rates were low, the corresponding delay cost the exporters $1m. a year. Today, sorting and grading is done far better and in less than half the time, and since 1968 exporters can airfreight pelts in under a week via Ariana Afghan Airlines to arrive in time for the Lodon September and November auctions, which have brought an enormous extra sales for Afghanistan.

(f) MARKETING POLICIES. Before the Afghan Karakul Institute was established, the London and New York auctions were treated merely as an international extension of the oriental market. At first the Institute had no authority to alter Afghanistan's selling policies. However, largely through educational efforts the Institute has significantly changed their traditional methods, and today the public auction, with its established style of operations, has become the principal means of marketing the Afghan Karakul. Very few skins are now sold outside the auction and non is sold directly from Afghanistan.The withdrawal rate which at one time was approximately 85%, has now been reduced to less than 10% as their modern marketing attitude now atttracts over 300 buyers to its auctions instead of a mere handful who once participated.

(g) LISTENNING TO THE BUYERS. A customer's legitimate complaint must be handled promptly, yet, until the Afghan Karakul Institute came to existence, there was no communication. Today, the Afghan represcntatives in London and New York are well-schooled businessmen who speak English as well as other languages, and one of them is present at each auction with authority to act on behalf of the Institute's members.

But, in addition to auction buyers, there are other fur interests to be studied Thus, each January and February a representative of the Institute visits the leading European fur centers and discusses Afghan Karakul with fur designers, manufacturers, processers, journalists and anyone else interested in the Afghan Karakul.

The Institute has established a promotion campaign and has taken advertising space in many major European trade magazines which has been supplemented by editorials. In addition, they have a public relations programme.

As a result of these efforts, the Institute has rebuilt buyer confidence in Afghan Karakul. However, this trust must be continuously earned in every auction and no driftnig back into old ways will be allowed.

ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

For an organization to be effective, there must be capable leadership. Before the advent of the Institute, the Afghan Karakul industry was composed of individuals operating for their own self-interest. No one accepted responsibility for its improvement and growth, and leadership was a matter of power. Thus, the second objective of the Institute's Board of Directors was to organize the industry and to provide leadership. This has been achieved, and now, all members are bound to common policies of marketing, transportation, sorting and grading, which is believed has produced a greater mutual understanding and trust.

Further, the feeling has developed that more can be accomplished together as a unit rather than as indivdauls, and the following data may shed light on the fact:

(a) Flockowners' average prices have risen from Afs. 200 to Afs. 400.

(b) The rate of exchange has increased from Afs. 35.5 to Afs. 65.

(c) Airfreight costs have been reduced from $1,150 to $800 per metric ton.

(e) All skins are sorted, graded and shipped with equal speed.

(f) All exporters are equally represented in each auction.

(g) Each segment of the industry has an equal voice in determining decisions affecting their interests.

(h) All flockowners and exporters are immediately informed of the valuation of skins and the auction results.

Now, the Institute is working to improve the rate of exchange; to reduce transportation costs; to obtain larger credits at lower costs; to improve curing methods and generally to better the lot of the flockowners and increase their profits.

PROPER FINANCING

The Afghan Karakul Institute is non-profit-making. All income exceeding operating costs is ploughed back into the Karakul industry. This attitude was adopted to avoid possible commercial conflict between the Institute's members. It is also a guarantee to members that income is being spent for their common good as well as insuring that programmes undertaken by the industry can be financed.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

From the outset, the Institute's directors agreed that its future development be guided by a long-term programme, but it should be outlined only after the financial future of the Institute was assured. It was on this same basis that after some years, the Board approved a five-year plan, and to date all scheduled improvements have been fulfilled.

MORE TO BE DONE

Though the Afgnan Karakul industry, through the efforts made by the Afghan Karakul Institute, has a much better situation than before, there are still many problems which need solving. These problems are mainly related to coping with the whims of fashion, dealing with the exigencies of nature and equally non-predictable complications.

The creation of a scientific farming co-operative is in the future programme, so is flockowners' education which includes international finance, economics, up-to-date husbandry and modern feeding methods. An intensive publicity campaign is yet another item on the agenda. Also of vital importance are local credit facilities for the shippers from the World Bank or other large organizations, for, only with such supports can the future programmes be achieved.

.THE VARIETY COLOUR

The only two differences in skins of Karakul are types of curl and colour. Afghanistan has more curl patterns and varieties of colours than any other country. "Chaqmaqi" sheep are more valuable than any of other types. Beside this, there are three more top quality sheep: "Nazukchah," "Nazukparni," and "Parni."

There are different types of skins, which include small, medium and large curls and ribbed. "Chaqmaqi" is ribbed, "Parni" is medium curl and "Uqgul" is a large curl type. Curly skins are usually less expensive than flat ones.

There are also many different colours ranging in black, grey—brown, white, golden-brown, sky-grey, beige, and brownish- grey. From among these "Chaqmaqi" usually brings in the highest price, while sky-grey is the highest in demand.

Whatever name they are called by, does not matter. The fact is that the Karakul pelt is produced in Afghanistan to go to the western markets and become the beauty-queen of the fashion rooms in New York, London, Paris and Rome.

FOREST CONSERVATION, AND AFFORESTATION IN AFGHANISTAN